



China Olympic star gives medicine to flood victims

Embargo-busting boats auctioned

KUWAIT (AFP) — Kuwait has auctioned off five boats seized by the emirate for violating U.N. trade sanctions imposed on Iraq in 1990, the official news agency KUNA reported Tuesday. The Kuwaiti ports authority has sold the five wooden dhows along with tyres, car batteries, spare parts, electronic equipment and 9,900 bags of fertilizer worth a total of \$1.2 million, the agency said. It is the first time Kuwait has announced the sale of boats and goods seized on their way to or from Iraq in violation of the economic embargo imposed after Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait in August 1990. Kuwaiti customs official Hussein Al Zaman said the proceeds would go to the foreign ministry. Mr. Zaman told KUNA that two types of boats generally violated the embargo — small oil ships and traditional wooden dhows used to transport goods.

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Government ready to work with opposition but within democratic practices and constitutional norms

By Yasser Abu Hilalah
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti said Tuesday he was willing to work with the opposition, whether inside or outside Parliament, to resolve outstanding issues, but warned that his government would not "accept any deviation from democratic practices and constitutional norms."

In a statement he made to the Jordan Times and Al Rai, the prime minister criticized the deputies who are threatening to boycott the Parliament session today describing parliamentary work as "a national achievement and any attempt at obstructing it as a 'crime

against the country and its achievements" (see story on page 3). Mr. Kabariti said the government sought dialogue with the opposition at the Lower House, "provided that such a dialogue will contribute to achieving a balance between the minority and majority and ensure that the executive and the legislative authorities would not encroach on each other's role."

Mr. Kabariti said his government had since its formation in February advocated "dialogue for the sake of taking decision, rather than dialogue for the sake of dialogue."

"Dialogue should become a national way of life and not an occasional or selective

practice."

He said the government had benefited a great deal from the ideas and thoughts that were expressed during the last two months over the issue of lifting subsidies on food and fodder, either in Parliament or in the media.

"When the government initiated the debate (over the bread issue), it was not evading its constitutional responsibilities or trying to appropriate the blame for the consequences of the decision on others," he said. "The government sought the opinion of experts and opinion leaders to ensure that its decision was sound."

Asked to comment on today's House session, which 24 deputies threatened

to boycott, he said: "We hope to reach a solution reflecting our democratic experience."

The prime minister belittled the significance of the deputies' boycott of the session saying that such an action would not help achieve anything, but rather will halt the passing of decisions and legislations.

Mr. Kabariti asked whether television coverage of parliamentary debate was a national demand and a central cause which does not allow for any compromises.

Mr. Kabariti Tuesday reported to the Council of Ministers on the outcome of His Majesty King Hussein's visit to Saudi Arabia and his talks with King Fahd.

Raising bread prices — calculated risk no other government wanted

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — By officially ending the decade-old policy of directly subsidising basic food commodities, the government of Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti took what many describe as a calculated risk, which, the prime minister insists, is dictated by the national interests of the state.

The government Monday raised bread prices and lifted subsidies on bread and animal feed despite the negative repercussions the decision could have and against the will of even pro-government deputies whose alternative proposals to the move was rejected by the prime minister on the grounds that they simply do not work.

The government plan had to be implemented, argued the prime minister, and the risks entailed in it had to be taken.

NEWS ANALYSIS

FOOD SUBSIDIES were initiated in the sixties when the government subsidised wheat. In 1974, when the ministry of Supply was established, the government subsidy was extended to other food items, including sugar and rice, and in 1980, the government decided to subsidise milk powder. In 1985 the government covered frozen chicken. As far as fodder is concerned, the Cooperative Organisation was handling it until the early 1990s when the government charged the Ministry of Supply with handling it. The Ministry of Supply's balance sheet shows a heavy deficit since 1990 when the government decided to ration food items. On Sept. 2, 1990, a decision on rationing food items was passed. The first food item to be rationed was milk powder, followed by sugar and rice. The government then introduced for the first time food coupons, whereby eligible beneficiaries who were on government subsidy of sugar and rice, in addition to their ration card, would be able to purchase food items. The government's subsidy for wheat was 100 million, for sugar 100 million, for rice 100 million, for milk powder 100 million, for frozen chicken 100 million, for milk 100 million, for oil 100 million, for flour 100 million, for meat 100 million, for eggs 100 million, for vegetables 100 million, for fruits 100 million, for other food items 100 million.

Lifting subsidies was a basic requirement of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)-sponsored economic reform programme on whose success Jordan has pinned

its hope for economic recovery and growth over the past several years.

Meeting the targets of the programme, which ends in 1998, means earning the

country the support of the IMF, other financial institutions and donor countries, in seeking foreign investments, loans and grants for the launching of future economic projects. Failing to do so would jeopardise the whole economic restructuring programme, government officials say. But proceeding with the programme poses a different set of challenges including risking a public outcry in reaction to increased economic difficulties.

The government, recognising that it cannot afford to sacrifice the reform programme, opted for taking the challenge.

In its short life in office, the Kabariti government had to tackle a number of problematic issues which brought it under fire from various political and business groups. But no challenge appeared as

(Continued on page 7)

No summit to discuss northern Iraq — Ciller

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkey is not planning a regional summit on northern Iraq, Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller said Tuesday, contradicting a proposal reportedly made by Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan during his visit to Iran.

According to the proposal mooted in Tehran, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey would hold a security summit over the issue of northern Iraq, where ethnic Kurds have been enjoying international protection since the end of the Gulf war in 1991.

"There's no question of a four-way summit on northern Iraq. Such a subject is not on the agenda" of Turkey, said Mrs. Ciller, who is acting prime minister while Mr. Erbakan is away on a five-nation Asian tour.

Also Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati cast doubt on the idea of Iraq attending such a summit.

"Participation of Iraq should be contingent upon the approval of the three main members (of the security committee): Iran, Turkey and Syria."

Turkey, Iran and Syria — all three of which have Kurdish minorities — have had ministerial-level meetings twice a year since November 1992 on the situation in northern Iraq, fear-

ing that a power vacuum there will lead to the creation of a Kurdish state.

Iraq's Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadan said Tuesday met two Turkish ministers and called for enhancing bilateral relations, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) said.

"Ramadan stressed during the meeting the importance of improving relations between the two neighbouring countries and bring them to the level that they were at in the past," INA said.

Turkey's Justice Minister Sevtok Kacan and Education Minister Mehmet Saglam, the first Turkish officials to visit Iraq for six years, arrived in Baghdad on Monday for talks to improve relations soured during the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis.

"The Turkish delegation's visit will contribute to finding new channels of cooperation...and will be a strong base for strategic ties in the future," Mr. Ramadan was quoted as saying.

The agency said Mr. Kacan "stressed his country's keenness to establish progressing relations with Iraq based on the two peoples' interests."

Turkey was a key ally of the American-led military coalition that ejected Iraqi troops from Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf war.

Kabariti: Door open for Kuwait reconciliation

KUWAIT (Agencies) — This week's Saudi-Jordanian summit has opened the door for reconciliation between Jordan and Kuwait, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti was quoted Tuesday as saying.

"The Saudi-Jordanian summit will no doubt contribute to normalisation of relations between Jordan and its brethren in the Gulf countries, including Kuwait," Mr. Kabariti told the new Al Rai Al Amm daily.

The door opened by the Sunday meeting in Jeddah between King Hussein and King Fahd, the first in six years, "will never be shut again."

Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, enjoys considerable influence in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council, an economic and political alliance which also groups Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain.

It was the base of the U.S.-led coalition force which threw Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. Kuwait's cabinet also made the neighbouring kingdom its temporary home in exile during Iraq's seven-month occupation of the emirate.

The governments of Kuwait and Jordan have been slowly moving back towards normalising ties

with Amman.

Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, Kuwait's foreign minister, believes closer ties with Jordan will further isolate the Iraqi government, which remains under crippling U.N. sanctions imposed after it invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

He told the opposition-dominated parliament earlier this year that Kuwait was "a small country which wants to make friends not enemies."

But most of the house's 50 lawmakers cannot accept reconciliation with Jordan.

On Tuesday Sheikh Sabah said the pace of normalisation of ties will be slow.

"There is not yet a precise date for this normalisation," said Sheikh Sabah in reaction to comments made by Mr. Kabariti.

Jordan's embassy in Kuwait has been closed since the Gulf crisis, while Kuwait's diplomatic mission in Amman is headed by a chargé d'affaires.

Sheikh Sabah told reporters Tuesday that no date has been set for normalising ties, but he shared Mr. Kabariti's optimism.

The Kuwaiti minister said Mr. Kabariti's comments were "simply suggestions and we share (the hopes) of Mr. Kabariti" for a reconciliation.

Jeddah summit not only cleared the air but also set ground for strong economic ties, Muasher says

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein's visit to Saudi Arabia and his talks with King Fahd and senior Saudi leaders earlier this week not only put an end to all strains in relations that resulted from the Gulf war but opened the door for better political and economic relations between the two states, Minister of Information Marwan Muasher said.

"This visit has ended all elements of strain in relations between the two countries, and ushered in a new era of cooperation in the political, economic and security fields," Dr. Muasher told a press briefing Tuesday.

On the economic front, Dr. Muasher said the Saudi leadership has now agreed to "open the door for the Saudi private sector, which for the past six years refrained from employing Jordanians, to take skilled labour and highly qualified personnel. This is a reversal of a political decision taken during the Gulf crisis to punish Jordan for its perceived role during the Gulf war."

"The Saudi government has so far contracted 2,500 Jordanians, mostly teachers,

to work in the Saudi public sector," he said. "What is new is that the Saudis will now open the doors of the private sector for us."

The Saudis, who have so far refrained from importing Jordanian agricultural produce because they said it did not meet Saudi standards, are expected to open their markets for Jordanian vegetables and fruits as well.

"We presented the Saudis with a technical report prepared by American experts that testifies to the safety of Jordanian agricultural produce," Dr. Muasher said.

He said that signs of the improved relations have been in evidence throughout the past six months.

"During the past six months of this year Saudi imports from Jordan totalled JD 54 million compared to JD 26 million in the same period of last year."

Dr. Muasher also predicted that problems that hamper transit Jordanian traffic, especially truck transiting Saudi Arabia to the Gulf, will be resolved soon.

Dr. Muasher said that the two countries' leadership agreed to enhance cooperation in the field of security, which was always good anyway.

Recent news reports spoke

of Jordan providing the Saudi authorities with information related to the June 25 explosion at a U.S. base in Saudi Arabia in which 19 American servicemen were killed and more than 100 injured. Last year the Jordanian authorities arrested a Palestinian Islamist, Abu Mohammad Al Maqdisi, who is described as the godfather for four Saudis convicted and beheaded for a November 1995 explosion at a U.S. base in the Saudi capital Riyadh in which four Americans and two Indians were killed.

On the political front, Dr. Muasher said the Saudi leadership "fully understood and appreciated the Jordanian position on the peace process." He did not elaborate, but another senior official involved in the negotiations with the Saudis and the talks that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held here last week told the Jordan Times that King Hussein and Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti briefed the Saudis on the Jordanian efforts to keep the peace process alive and going forward.

According to this official, who did not wish to be identified, the Saudis were particularly impressed with the

way Jordanians were keeping their channels open with all the parties to the peace process, and the influence the Jordanian leadership is exerting on Mr. Netanyahu.

The official said that during Mr. Netanyahu's visit to Jordan last week, the Jordanians were able to get a commitment from the Israeli prime minister "to heed Jordanian water complaints, and a pledge to open the Israeli and Palestinian markets to Jordanian produce."

The official said accordingly Jordan was hoping to export \$200 million-worth of products to Israel and the Palestinian territories. As for water, the official said the Israelis promised Jordan they would provide the Kingdom with a significant amount of water as stipulated by the peace treaty signed between the two countries in 1994. According to the treaty, Israel should have provided the Kingdom with 50 million cubic metres of water within a year of the treaty signing from available sources.

As for Jordanians in Israeli jails the official said three prisoners would be released soon. The case of another 15, he said, is difficult since they were convicted of murder and jailed for life.

Peres, Palestinians warn settlement expansion will kill peace process

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Palestinian officials and Israel's former leader warned Tuesday that expanding Jewish settlements in the West Bank will kill the peace process and turn Israel into a binational state living in perpetual strife.

This is a new breach for what had been agreed upon and what had been signed, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat told reporters in Gaza.

The Israeli defence ministry said on Monday that Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai approved placing 298 mobile homes in Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for public and educational use ahead of the school year.

It said 115 mobile homes

would be placed at educational institutions, 100 at a vocational school in the Ariel settlement and 83 at public institutions.

"If the Israelis' policy toward settlements will continue, I can assure that there will be no peace," Palestinian Parliament Speaker Ahmed Qouriea told the Associated Press.

Earlier Tuesday, officials confirmed that Uri Ariel, a key settler leader, will be named as a government coordinator for settlement construction in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Mr. Ariel refused comment.

Mr. Ariel, the officials said, is to work in the defence ministry, which reportedly plans to simplify the procedure for

approving new construction in the settlements.

The Maariv daily said settler leaders have put forward some 200 plans for building thousands of homes.

Michael Eitan, head of the ruling Likud party faction in parliament, said Israel planned to settle many more Jews in the West Bank and Gaza. "There will be new neighbourhoods (in the settlements) and many Jews will come and live there," Mr. Eitan said.

On Monday, the government announced 15 million shekels (\$5 million) in aid to the settlers and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he planned to build more roads in the West Bank.

The new focus on settlements reflects the reversal in Israel's policies since Mr. Netanyahu's May election victory over Shimon Peres, the architect of the autonomy agreements with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Addressing a special meeting of parliament Tuesday, Mr. Peres said the settlement activity would lead to a de facto annexation of the West Bank and Gaza.

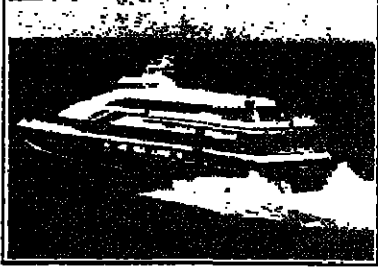
A reversal of that disengagement process would endanger the Jewish majority in Israel, Mr. Peres said. "It is possible to settle. The question is whether it is desirable, whether you want (to) turn Israel into a binational state."



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BREAD BECOMES DEARER: The government on Monday announced an increase in the price of bread as part of a move to remove subsidies for wheat in line with the Kingdom's economic restructuring programme while also extending cash compensation to Jordanians to offset the increase (Reuters photo)

Saddam executed 122 army officers, opposition reports

DUBAI (AFP) — The Iraqi opposition accused President Saddam Hussein Tuesday of executing dozens of army officers at a time when Baghdad is trying to win back its place in the international community through its oil-for-food deal with the United Nations.

The Iraqi National Accord, based in Jordan, said 122 senior Iraqi army officers accused of plotting against President Saddam were executed between Aug. 1 and 3.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) said 10 Iraqi officers from the elite Republican Guards had been executed "in the last few days" for their part in a failed coup attempt in July.

The Tehran-based Shiite Muslim opposition group said President Saddam's son Uday "supervised" the execution of the officers who included two generals, two colonels and two commanders.

SCIRI announced last month that a coup backed by the United States and Jordan was thwarted in Baghdad, a claim denied by Amman.

Reports of repression, firing squads and the arrest of soldiers have been circulating in opposition circles for more than a month, but there has been no official comment from Baghdad.

which generally remains tight-lipped on such matters.

A first bid to overthrow President Saddam took place on June 27 at Al Rashid air base where pilots had planned to bomb the presidential palace, opposition groups said.

A second coup attempt took place on July 20 at Habbaniya, west of Baghdad, but the plot was uncovered and its leader Major Fawzi Karim Al Hamdani arrested, according to the Iraqi National Accord.

The Iraqi National Congress, an opposition coalition, said on July 11 that at least 120 army officers had been arrested for plotting against the regime. Dozens have since been executed on President Saddam's orders, it said.

An Iraqi National Accord official said Wednesday that the most senior of the 122 executed officers for plotting against President Saddam was General Abdul Motek Al Juburi, from the northern town of Mosul, a "hero" of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

Gen. Juburi was first arrested by the authorities in 1991, but then released under an amnesty in July 1995 before being picked up again last month as part of a sweep within the ranks of the Iraqi armed forces, the official said.

Iraq, which has been

under U.N. sanctions since its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, is trying to renew contacts with the international community after the conclusion of an oil-for-food deal on May 20.

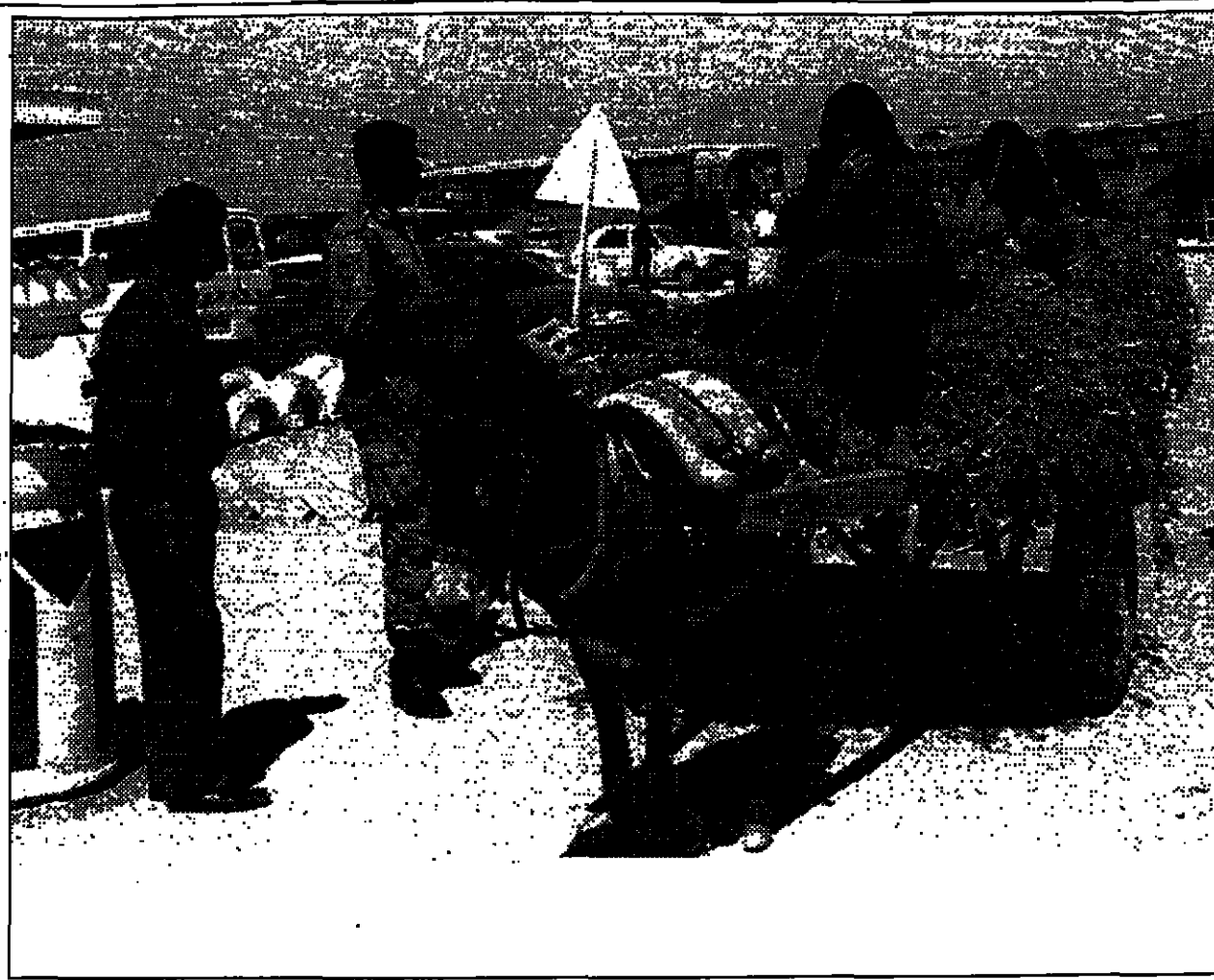
Under the deal, the Iraqi government will be allowed to resume limited oil exports for the first time since 1990 in exchange for food and medicine.

"Iraq will take up its role again in the international community and there is a worldwide willingness to deal with it," the ruling Baath Party newspaper Al Thawra wrote this week.

However, concern over increased repression were raised Tuesday before the U.N.'s human rights sub-committee in Geneva.

SCIRI representative Ali Ali Al Adhadi told the committee of heavy artillery attacks on southern marshland areas of Iraq populated mainly by Shiite Muslims, which he said left several dead late last month.

But an Iraqi government representative fired back against what he called the political agenda of some organisations "which stir up tension to maintain the blockade" and "distract attention from the responsibility of states who are starving the Iraqi population."



LIFE CONTINUES: Three Palestinian women ride their donkey-carts past Palestinian police on guard near the Rafah border on Tuesday. The carts are laden with wild grass the women have gathered to feed their sheep. The Gaza Strip and the West Bank remain under an Israeli blockade imposed in February, with the bulk of the Palestinians there not allowed to enter the Jewish state (Reuters photo)

Progress in Gaza — homegrown television melodrama at last

The Associated Press

GAZA CITY — Ayoub Akhras spent four years in Israeli jails for supporting Palestinian militants. Salah Kadoumi spent 22 years in exile. Now they are masterminding a new project: Palestinian television's first series.

As producer and director of "Fishermen's Nights," they are leading the latest breakthrough in the Palestinians' march from Israeli occupation towards self-determination.

The low-budget series, using mostly props found on local beaches, begins airing in January. Its 39 episodes weave Palestinian history — from Israeli occupation, through rebellion to the current autonomy — into a maze of crime, personal tragedy and unrequited love.

"The fishermen and their problems of poverty under the occupation are a reflection of Palestinian society," said 45-year-old Kadoumi, the mustachioed, energetic director.

"Camera, sound, action," Mr. Kadoumi bellowed through a megaphone across a Gaza beach, ordering his nine actors into place for filming Sunday.

On cue, drug-peddling fisherman Abu Sharr stuffs the head of his colleague Jamil into a bucket of water and threatens to slit his throat.

Jamil, suspected of steal-

ing Abu Sharr's supplies, pleads innocence. Abu Sharr, whose name means "father of evil," finally lets the whimpering Jamil go free.

"Cut," shouted Mr. Kadoumi, satisfied with the take.

Although Mr. Kadoumi says drama is at the core of the show, politics is also in the air.

"During the uprising, the Israelis controlled all this and we could not film on location," said actor Akram Obeid, 29, who once worked as a house painter in Israel. "There is no doubt that the peace process gives us the full freedom for actors to work."

During the occupation, the Israeli government did not provide funding for Palestinian art, theatre or cinema. The few directors and producers there raised their own money. Palestinian television did not exist.

"Fishermen's Nights" is the first large-scale mini-series to be shown by the Palestinians' only television station, which also airs newscasts, smaller series and a handful of special programmes.

Mr. Akhras, the producer, said he spent four years in Israeli jails for aiding the Fateh Hawks, a militant group once associated with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

Mr. Kadoumi spent 22 years in exile, returning in

1994 when Gaza gained autonomy. Like many, he fled the West Bank shortly after Israel seized it in 1967.

Mr. Kadoumi, who earned a communications doctorate in Bulgaria, said that with "Fishermen's Nights" he was aiming for a delicate "European" touch, distinct from the sometimes overwrought local fare.

The show is careful not to offend its target audience. A young woman is covered in traditional dress, and although she has a secret boyfriend, the couple never kiss on screen.

"It would not be appropriate for our audience, for the Arabic culture," explained Mr. Kadoumi. "We don't believe in this kind of love."

Mr. Kadoumi refused to discuss his budget, which is provided by the impoverished Palestinian National Authority, which runs the lone television station.

But he pointed out that the costumes were regular clothing and most of the props, from the fishing boats to an abandoned pier that collapsed two years ago mid-construction, were simply found on the beach.

Mr. Kadoumi conceded the acting still needs work.

"During the past years, these actors and artists were not nurtured or utilised, so they are not the best," he said. "Their work reflects the society in which they live."

6 killed in Algerian violence

PARIS (R) — Six people, including a journalist, have been killed in a bomb explosion and two attacks by gunmen in Algeria, Algerian newspapers said on Tuesday.

Guerrillas shot dead an Algerian journalist working for state-run radio and his brother, a policeman, in the capital Algiers on Monday, French-language newspapers said.

Pro-government armed men on Saturday ambushed guerrillas, killing three rebels near Tiznit, 40 kilometres east of Algiers, said Liberte on Tuesday.

A bomb ripped through a tax office on Sunday in Baghliat town, 45 kilometres southeast of the Algerian capital, destroying the office and killing one guard, Liberte added.

The explosion was the latest in a rash of bomb attacks in Algiers and other towns since mid-July in which more than 20 people have been killed.

The authorities blamed anti-government guerrillas in the bombings.

In the Monday attack, gunmen opened fire on a car in which journalist Mohamed Guessab and his two brothers were driving in the Algiers suburb of Beau Fraiser, Le Matin and Liberte newspapers reported.

Guessab and his policeman brother were killed and the third man was seriously wounded, they said.

Libyan air force reportedly bombs militants

SALLOUM (AP) — Libyan air force planes are bombing the suspected hideouts of militants in the mountains of eastern Libya, travellers reaching Egypt said Tuesday.

The travellers, mainly Egyptian and Libyan businessmen, said the offensive had been going on for about a week. But a Libyan opposition leader in Cairo said Libyan ground and air forces have been operating in the region for nearly a month, in part under the cover of "live-fire" military manoeuvres announced by the government.

The businessmen said they believed the campaign marked an intensification of efforts by Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi's government to try to wipe out the radicals, who have been blamed for months of unrest.

All spoke on condition their names not be used for fear of reprisal.

The air action was reported in the green mountain region around the coastal city of Darnah, which is 260 kilometres west of the Libya-Egypt border.

The travellers reaching the Egyptian border town of Salloom had no reports on casualties. The London-based Arabic weekly Al-Wasat reported earlier this month that clashes between Libyan security forces and Islamic opposition have claimed 600 lives in the past 12 months, according to opposition activists.

They included an estimated 250 dead and 300 wounded among government forces and 350 dead and 480 wounded among the opposition, Al Wasat said.

The Libyan government has made no official announcement of the unrest in eastern Libya and, instead, has talked of a campaign against drug smugglers in the region.

The travellers said government forces have encircled Darnah and allow only people with special permits to leave and enter.

Darnah has been the site of several previous clashes between government troops and militants. In April, the Libyan Al Gamaa Al Islamiya, claimed responsibility for four attacks in which they said they killed five policemen and two soldiers. In March, a series of skirmishes were reported in the region after Muslim militants reportedly engineered a prison break in which some 400 of their colleagues and other government opponents escaped.

Afghan faction denies ceasefire with Kabul

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — Northern Afghanistan's Jumbish-e-Milli movement of opposition warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum on Tuesday denied reaching a formal truce with President Burhanuddin Rabbani's government.

But a Jumbish spokesman in Islamabad, Abdul Baqi Turkistani, said that fighting had ceased between forces loyal to Mr. Rabbani and a Jumbish led supreme coordination council alliance while a government envoy was in the northern town of Mazar-e-Sharif with peace proposals.

He made the comments when asked about a broadcast by official Kabul Radio on Monday night that the government had reached a ceasefire with the council effective from 8.00 a.m. (0530 GMT) on Tuesday "throughout northern areas."

"There is no ceasefire, but there is also no fighting," Mr. Turkistani said.

He said an envoy of

Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Humayun Jarik, was in Mazar-e-Sharif with an offer to the three-party coordination council to join the government.

But he said the council had its conditions, including a transfer of power from Mr. Rabbani, the formation of a government acceptable to all factions and ethnic groups, a neutral force to control Kabul and subsequent elections.

No agreement has been reached and the talks were continuing, Mr. Turkistani said.

Jumbish, which says it controls seven northern provinces, has been in confrontation with the Kabul government since January 1994 when it switched sides to join with the then opposition Hezbe-Islami faction of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

Mr. Hekmatyar rejoined the government as prime minister in late June under a peace pact with Mr. Rabbani, whose capital is also

besieged by the powerful Taleban militia.

Monday's Kabul Radio broadcast said the truce followed talks which Mr. Hekmatyar's delegation had held with the coordination council, inviting it to join the government and to open the Salang highway to Central Asia that is controlled by Gen. Dostum's forces.

The broadcast said the truce would be respected until the conclusion of the talks and that both sides would refrain from hostile propaganda against each other.

The coordination council has so far rejected Mr. Hekmatyar's urgings to join the government. Instead, its three parties joined two other factions last month in a new front to work for a transfer of power from Mr. Rabbani.

The purported ceasefire came as Mr. Hekmatyar battles to assert his authority and win the support of the Afghan public.

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PROGRAMME TWO
15:05 Iris — The Happy Professor
15:20Flintstones
15:45The New Three Stooges
15:50The Adventures
16:10Kelly
16:30Doc — The Earth Revealed
17:00 Doc — La France Aux 1000 Villages
17:30 Varieties — L'Invite De Marque
18:00Doc — Roule Routier
19:00Le Journal
19:15Magazine — Sport Et Musique
19:30News Headlines
19:35Evening Shade
20:00Super Stars of Action
20:30Chancer
21:10Hunter
22:00News in English
22:25The Bold and the Beautiful
23:10Bugs

PRAYER TIMES
04:29Fajr
05:54(Sunrise) Duha
12:40Dhuhr
16:20Asr
19:27Maghreb
20:25Isha

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German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457.
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295.
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Relative hot weather conditions will prevail with temperatures slightly above average and winds northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate to active and seas calm.
Min/Max. temp. Amman22/35

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Dr. Afif Shukri898863
Dr. Nidal Al Dahleh827195
Dr. Osama Hussein847289
Firas pharmacy661912
Ferdows pharmacy890280
Al Asema pharmacy637055
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637661
Nairokh pharmacy623672
Najib pharmacy847632
IRBID:
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Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Rati Alallah994422
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

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Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Aqaba27/40
Deserts20/38
Jordan Valley26/40
Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 35, Aqaba 38 Humidity readings: Amman 46 per cent, Aqaba 38 per cent.

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NIGHT DUTY
Dr. Hanna Mansour750197
Dr. Afif Shukri898863
Dr. Nidal Al Dahleh827195
Dr. Osama Hussein847289
Firas pharmacy661912
Ferdows pharmacy890280
Al Asema pharmacy637055
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637661
Nairokh pharmacy623672
Najib pharmacy847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu281484
Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Rati Alallah994422
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre. 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints605800
Price Complaints661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television773111
Radio Jordan774111
Water Authority680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, 644281/6
Akkleh Maternity, 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77101/3
Al-Bashir,775111/26

Army, Marka891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarga Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarga National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08(53250).

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ)
Flights
08:00Damascus (RJ)
09:30Jeddah (RJ)
09:55Lamaca (RJ)
10:10Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:50Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
15:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:45 Toronto, Amsterdam (RJ)

18:00Paris (RJ)
18:15Istanbul (RJ)
18:50Madrid (RJ)
19:00Brussels, Geneva (RJ)
19:10Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
19:15London, Berlin (RJ)
19:30 Montreal, Amsterdam (RJ)
19:40Rome (RJ)
21:40Tel Aviv (add) (RJ)
00:30Beirut (RJ)
02:35Cairo (RJ)
04:25 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

Other Flights
12:00Sanaa (IY)
13:15Jeddah (SV)
13:00 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)
13:15Cairo (MS)
13:40Doha, Abu Dhabi (GF)
14:30Tunis (TU)
15:00Vienna (OS)
16:20Algiers (AH)
19:00London, Beirut (BA)
20:40Beirut (ME)
21:10Tel Aviv (LY)
22:35Lamaca (CY)
23:20Amsterdam (KL)
23:30Athens (OA)
06:30Tel Aviv (LY)
Royal Wings (RW) Flights
19:45Tel Aviv (QAL) (RW)

DEPARTURES
07:10Madrid (RJ)
11:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:30Rome (RJ)
11:40Berlin, London (RJ)
12:10Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:45Istanbul (RJ)
19:30Tel Aviv (add) (RJ)
20:10Calcutta (RJ)
20:20Colombo (RJ)
20:45Beirut (RJ)
21:00 Abu Dhabi, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
21:10Riyadh (RJ)
21:10Cairo (RJ)
21:20New Delhi (RJ)
22:15Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:50Bangkok (RJ)
23:10Cairo (RJ)
01:00Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights
04:00Amsterdam (KL)
08:45Beirut (ME)
09:15London (BA)
13:00Sanaa (IY)
13:45Jeddah (SV)
14:15 Beirut, Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)
14:15Cairo (MS)
14:30Doha, Muscat (GF)
15:30Tunis (TU)
15:50Vienna (OS)
17:20Sharjah (AH)
20:00Dubai (EK)
22:50Tel Aviv (LY)
23:30Lamaca (CY)
00:20Amsterdam (KL)
04:00Athens (OA)
04:35Antalia (TK)
07:25Tel Aviv (LY)

Royal Jordanian (RJ)

Flights
07:10Madrid (RJ)
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11:30Rome (RJ)
11:40Berlin, London (RJ)
12:10Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:45Istanbul (RJ)
19:30Tel Aviv (add) (RJ)
20:10Calcutta (RJ)
20:20Colombo (RJ)
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21:10Cairo (RJ)
21:20New Delhi (RJ)
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22:50Bangkok (RJ)
23:10Cairo (RJ)
01:00Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights
04:00Amsterdam (KL)
08:45Beirut (ME)
09:15London (BA)
13:00Sanaa (IY)
13:45Jeddah (SV)
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14:15Cairo (MS)
14:30Doha, Muscat (GF)
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22:50Tel Aviv (LY)
23:30Lamaca (CY)
00:20Amsterdam (KL)
04:00Athens (OA)
04:35Antalia (TK)
07:25Tel Aviv (LY)

Home

Queen N

to aviation

Her Majesty Queen Noor has been awarded the Distinguished Order of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for her services to the nation and the world.

KABARITI MEETS W

Prime Minister Abdul Karim Qasbi met with the Under Secretary of Defense for Studies and Research to discuss the situation in the region.

Teachers for new

AMMAN (J. T.) — The preparation for the upcoming 1996-97 school year is in progress. The Ministry of Education is conducting seminars for school principals as well as summer ones for teachers to familiarize them with the new second level curricula.

PLAY

"Medea" (Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre at Amman.

FILM

"A Fish Called Wanda" at the British Council at Amman.

LECTURES

"Results of the 1996-97 season at the Southern Desert" by Professor Dr. J. T. at the Amman.

Libyan
air force
reportedly
bombs
militants

Home News

Queen Noor distributes diplomas to aviation college graduates

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday distributed diplomas to 69 graduates from the Queen Noor Civil Aviation Technical College as well as royal gifts to honour students and long-time staff members, according to a Royal Court statement.

Queen Noor, whose father Najeeb Halaby was the head of the Federal Aviation Administration during the John F. Kennedy administration as well as president of Pan American Airlines, travelled throughout the Middle East before her marriage to research aviation training facilities for the preparation of a master plan for an Arab Air University to be established in Jordan.

This was a project that was initiated by His Majesty King Hussein to promote pan-Arab cooperation, the statement said.

The Queen expressed her pride in the college, which has been cited by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) as one of the best centres of its kind in the developing world, and said that it has realised King Hussein's dream for a regional aviation educational institution.

Director-General of Civil Aviation Authority Captain Jaser Zayyad outlined the history of the college, which was founded in 1973 as a civil aviation training centre in cooperation with the United



Her Majesty Queen Noor distributes diplomas to graduates from the Queen Noor Civil Aviation Technical College (Petra photo)

Nations Development Project (UNDP) and ICAO. The centre was granted the status of an institute in 1978 and was named after Queen Noor in 1980 when she became its honorary president.

Six years later, the Ministry of Higher Education upgraded the institute to a college, granting it licence to teach two-year programmes and to offer diplomas equivalent to those of a community college.

The Dean of the college, Taysir Taj, said that in 1990 the college became a founding member of the international aviation training programme "Trainair", which was established to

develop model training programmes for civil aviation training centres in developing countries to raise both standard and performance, the statement continued.

He added that the college has developed six model training programmes and is working on two more which are due to be completed by the end of this year.

The Queen Noor Civil Aviation College offers a specialised training programme for civil aviation employees in addition to its two-year diploma programme.

Its comprehensive educational curriculum includes basic air traffic control,

aeronautic courses covering telecommunication operations, engineering and meteorology.

The college, which has graduated 2,795 students and trainees since its inception, has enrolled students from the Levant, the Gulf countries, Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Indonesia, Thailand and Canada.

Queen Noor was accompanied by HRH Prince Faisal Al Hussein, and received by Minister of Transport Naser Lawzi, Sharif Ghazi Rakan, Chief of the Air Force Mohammad 'Ababneh and Executive Director of Royal Jordanian Nader Dhahabi, the statement said.



KABARITI MEETS WITH BAHRAINI UNDER-SECRETARY
Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Tuesday reviewed bilateral relations with Bahraini Under-Secretary of Defence and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Bahraini Centre for Studies and Research Sheikh Salman Ben Hamad Ben Issa Al Khalifa. In a statement to Petra following the meeting, Sheikh Salman said he discussed with Mr. Kabariti issues of common concern in various fields. Earlier on Tuesday Sheikh Salman visited the headquarters of the armed forces where he was received by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Miral Kaabneh, where they discussed military cooperation between the two countries. Sheikh Salman also visited Hussein Medical Centre, where he was briefed by Director of Royal Medical Services Youssef Qoussas on the role of Royal Medical Services in providing healthcare services to Armed Forces personnel and their families.

Teachers complete seminars for new academic year

AMMAN (J. T.) — In preparation for the upcoming 1996-97 scholastic year the Ministry of Education instituted seminars for school principals as well as summer ones for teachers to familiarise them with the new secondary level curricula.

Teachers are to return to school on Aug 19 to complete necessary preparations for the

scholastic year. Classes are scheduled to begin Aug 24.

Teachers, returning from their secondment to other Arab countries, have been appointed to new posts according to a Ministry of Education statement issued Tuesday.

The ministry transferred 1500 teachers to centres in various governorates and employed an

additional 3000 teachers, the statement further noted.

An expected 1.35 million students are to start the new academic year.

Meanwhile the ministry received all necessary textbooks for each school grade and duly dispersed them to the education departments in the governorates for subsequent student distribution.

WHAT'S GOING ON

PLAY • "Medea" (Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.	POETRY • Recital of poems at the Royal Cultural Centre, conference hall at 7:00 p.m.	EXHIBITIONS • Wrought-iron exhibition by Salim Baidak at Kamal Zaman at 7:00 p.m.
FILM • "A Place Called Wanda" at the British Council at 7:00 p.m.	LECTURES • Results of the 1996 Session at the Sharm El Sheikh International Conference at the American Cultural Centre, until Aug. 29.	

Efforts to resolve dispute with opposition deputies fail

By Tareq Momani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Efforts to resolve the conflict that has developed between 24 opposition law makers and the government over the government's decision to lift bread subsidies reached a deadend Tuesday.

Islamic Action Front spokesman Hamzeh Mansour said the opposition group would continue to boycott Parliament's sessions until Jordan Television broadcasts the speeches they made during the special session the Lower House held last week discussing the subsidies issue.

The 24 deputies charge that JTV misrepresented their speeches and have threatened to continue to abort the House meetings

by boycotting the sessions and thus denying them a quorum until JTV air their speeches.

The House failed to meet last Wednesday because of the lack of quorum and is scheduled to meet again today, Wednesday.

Lower House Speaker Saad Hayel-Strout held a series of meetings Tuesday with representatives of the various parliamentary blocs to secure deputies' attendance of Wednesday's session. At least 54 deputies must be present in order to secure a quorum or the session will be aborted.

Mr. Strout also met with representatives of the 24 opposition deputies and offered to allow the opposition to declare its stand in a televised statement but Mr. Mansour

stressed that his group will not attend today's session.

"We adhere to our stand and we are boycotting the sessions until JTV broadcasts last week's speeches and we are demanding that Jordan Television cameras be denied access into the House if our request is not met," Mr. Mansour said.

"We have met with Mr. Strout, heard his views and will convey them to our group just before the convening of Wednesday's session," he added.

Other deputies, however, criticised their 24 colleagues, saying their stand can only result in preventing the House from carrying out its duties.

Centrist deputy Mohammad Abu Aleem

said: "I am against boycotting (parliamentary) sessions as such actions disrupt Parliament's duties. A deputy can air his views in Parliament but should not boycott sessions as this does not resolve any problem."

"What has been going on between the government and the opposition reflects the true image of democracy but the two sides must be careful to arrive at an acceptable compromise," he said.

A special parliamentary committee formed to secure a compromise between the government and the House over the lifting of subsidies has meanwhile announced that it will pursue efforts to secure a quorum for Wednesday's session up to the last minute.

New prices of wheat, flour announced

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Supply Munir Sobar Tuesday

announced the new increased rates of wheat and flour and said that the new rates will take effect immediately.

According to the minister's statement, a tonne of domestic flour will be sold at JD 132.670, while a tonne of wheat will be sold to the mills to produce refined flour at JD 169.690.

A tonne of semolina will sell wholesale at JD 170, while semolina will sell retail at 300 fils per kilo.

A kilo of domestic flour will sell at the rate of 170 fils per kilo retail, while a kilo of refined

flour will be sold for 240 fils, the statement said.

Mr. Sobar Monday set the price for a kilo of domestic bread at 180 fils, and bread made of other than domestic flour at 220 fils.

Prior to the increase, domestic bread sold at 85 fils per kilo and all other kinds at 150 fils.

The Ministry of Supply said Monday that citizens wishing to be compensated for the difference in the price of bread should present their family books to any of the following banks or postal savings funds in order to obtain a cash subsidy.

The Arab Bank, the Islamic Bank, the Cairo

Amman Bank, the National Bank, the Bank of Jordan, the Jordan Gulf Bank, and the Jordan-Kuwait Bank.

The cash subsidy was set by the government at JD 128 per person per month. Many of the country's private institutions have already volunteered to compensate their employees and dependents.

The ministry also announced that it will continue providing the public with subsidised milk powder, rice and sugar for which it has been issuing special coupons to limited-income groups since 1991.

On Sunday, the minis-

ter announced the new prices of fresh milk and other dairy products, increasing them by 13 to 18 per cent over their former price.

In another announcement Tuesday, Mr. Sobar hiked the price of Marlboro cigarettes up from JD 1,200 to JD 1,250, and the Silk Cut brand from JD 1,000 to JD 1,050.

Parliament members have demanded that the government retain the former bread prices by raising funds to cover the budget deficit through an increase in the prices of non-essential commodities like cigarettes and liquor.

Death of Filipina in Amman raises unanswered questions

By Alia Toukan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The mysterious death of a Filipina domestic helper in Jordan last month has prompted an outcry in the Philippines with President Fidel Ramos ordering an official inquiry Tuesday as to the circumstances leading to her demise.

Details of the death of 26-year-old Eliza Salem remain sketchy. But a note she left behind, as well as circumstantial evidence, suggest she fell to her death as she was climbing down an electric cable from the third-floor apartment of her employer where she had been locked in for over a week.

The note, a copy of which was made available to the Jordan Times, also suggests that the woman feared physical abuse which, the note implies, she had suffered before.

No immediate explanation was available as to this particular aspect of the incident.

According to Shafiq Jumeana, the Philippines Consul in Amman, suspicions relating to this incident are "completely groundless and unjustified." He told the Jordan Times that the investigations are

"nearly over" and have proven that Ms. Salem, whose remains arrived in the Philippines August 1, was attempting to run away when she fell to her death.

Describing the investigations as "straightforward," Mr. Jumeana dismissed allegations in the Philippines of foul play in the Jordanian authorities' investigations.

Ms. Salem was employed by a Jordanian medical doctor who works in Saudi Arabia and is married to an Egyptian. The childless couple maintained an apartment in Amman for use during their regular visits to the Kingdom.

Ms. Salem was reportedly locked in the Shmeisani apartment for more than a week in July to "clean and prepare" ahead of her employers return to Amman. The keys to the apartment were kept with a friend of the employers, who has requested to remain anonymous, and who locked Ms. Salem in, upon their request, so that "valuables are not stolen," he told the Jordan Times.

He added that there "was plenty of food in the refrigerator" for the domestic helper.

The domestic helper spoke to her employers on July 26, and was told that they would be returning soon, said Mr. Jumeana.

According to various sources, the following day Ms. Salem threw her belongings from the window and tried to climb down from the third floor of the apartment building using a cable wire tied to the air-conditioner.

She was found unconscious in the garden by the apartment caretaker at about 6:00 a.m. who took her to Shmeisani Hospital. She died five hours later from extreme "haemorrhaging," according to hospital and autopsy reports.

Foreign Secretary of the Philippines, Domingo Siazon, will submit a full report on Ms. Salem's death to President Ramos Thursday.

Her death has received great publicity in the Philippines as another Filipina maid, Sarah Balaban, was recently granted a reprieve from a death sentence in the United Arab Emirates where she was convicted of killing her employer who attempted to rape her.

The government of the Philippines is strengthening laws to protect the four million Filipinos working abroad.

Islamic group condemns Russian 'aggression'

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Council of Islamic Organisations and Societies (CIOSI) Tuesday urged Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin to stop the war in Chechnya and to withdraw Russian forces from the republic, according to a CIOSI statement.

"The Chechen people, as all other nations in the former Soviet Union, is seeking independence from Russia but Moscow is adamantly insisting upon controlling this nation by force and against the will of

the Chechens who yearn for independence and freedom" said the CIOSI in a letter sent to Mr. Yeltsin through the Russian embassy in Jordan.

The letter, which lauded what it called the heroism of the Chechen people, said that the war against the Chechens was wounding the sentiments of more than 1,200 million Muslims worldwide.

"Muslims feel great pain over the suffering of their brothers and sisters and strongly condemn the Russian aggression (against Chechnya)," said the CIOSI.

The letter, which was signed by the CIOSI Secretary-General Abdul Latif Subeili, called on Mr. Yeltsin to end the fighting, give the Chechens their freedom and "establish good relations with them based on mutual respect."

"Only when you have done that will you find Islamic nations once again on your side, supporting your endeavours against aggression and colonialism," the letter said.

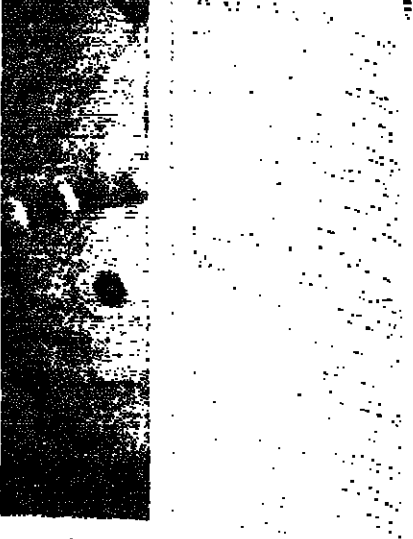
The Jordanian Committee for Solidarity with the Chechen People also condemned what it called the blatant Russian aggression

against the Chechen people and demanded an immediate halt to the conflict.

In a statement issued Tuesday, the committee accused Mr. Yeltsin of reneging on promises he had made to the Chechen people, adding that Russian forces were killing civilians indiscriminately, destroying their homes and displacing hundreds of thousands of innocent Chechens.

The committee urged the international community and world organisations to pressure Russia to stop the war in Chechnya.

Polish zoo seeks home for happy hippos



1975 ader

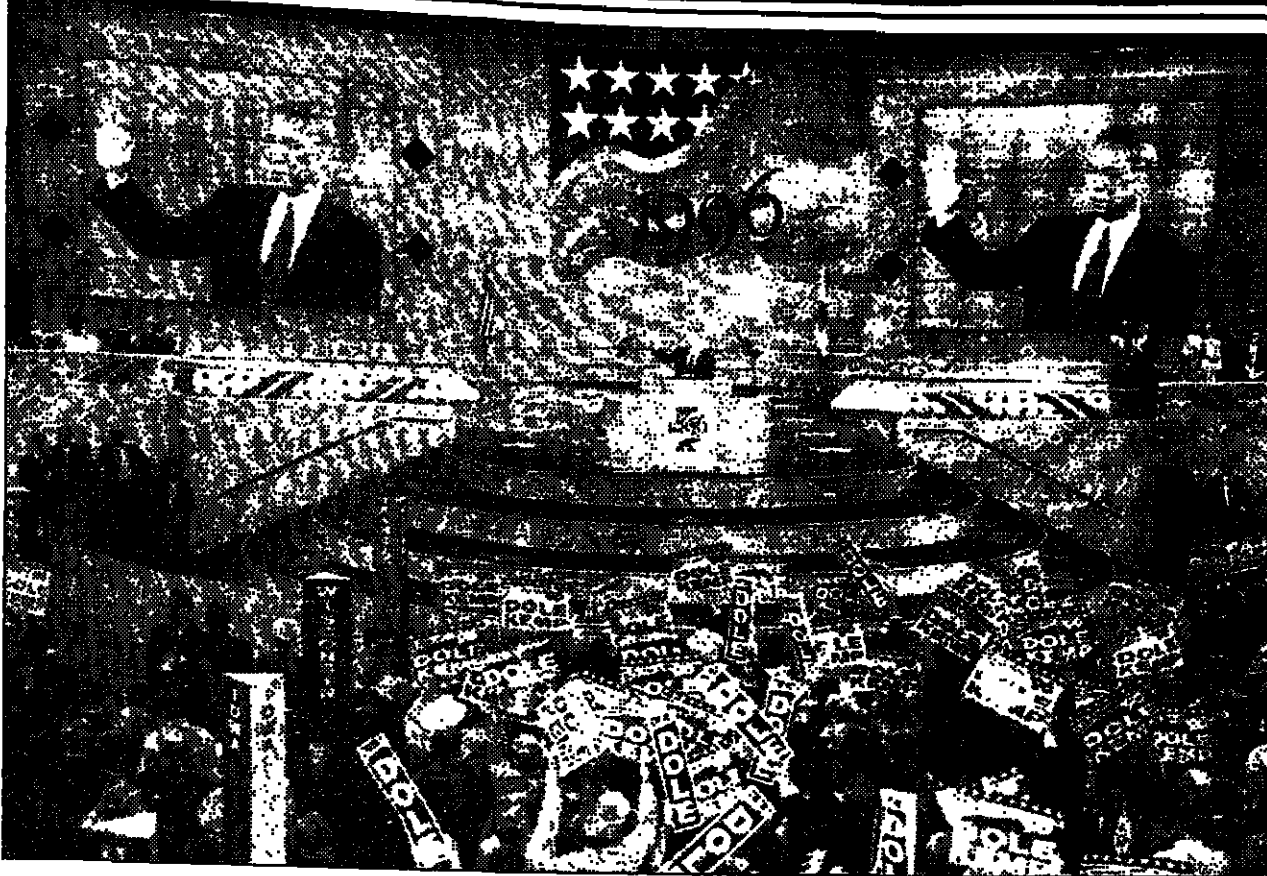
Murderer's must court victory or prison a pack

ning

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Retired General Colin Powell waves to the crowd as he prepares to address the evening session of the Republican National Convention Monday. Gen. Powell's speech concluded the first day of the four-day convention (Reuter photo)

S. Korea orders clemency for ex-associates of Roh

SEOUL (R) — South Korea, which is preparing to commemorate the 51st anniversary of liberation from Japanese rule, said Tuesday it would restore the civil rights of several former aides to disgraced ex-President Roh Tae-Woo.

A Justice Ministry spokesman said the government would also free 586 prisoners Thursday, marking the end of Japan's harsh 1910-45 colonial rule over the Korean peninsula.

Among those benefiting from the clemency was Kim Chong-Hwi, Mr. Roh's former chief secretary for security and foreign affairs.

Mr. Kim was sentenced to a suspended jail term of three years earlier this year for accepting 230 million won (\$282,000) in bribes linked to state arms procurements.

Another prominent figure included in the clemency order was Rhee Yong-Man, who was convicted this year of taking bribes from a commercial bank while serving as finance minister during Mr. Roh's rule.

Mr. Rhee escaped imprisonment in May when an appeals court suspended his 2-1/2 year jail sentence.

The civil rights of former Trade Minister Ahn Byong-Hwa will also be reinstated. Mr. Ahn, a former president of the state-run Korea Electric Power Corp., was sentenced to three years in jail in 1994 on corruption charges. He was released in a special Liberation Day pardon a year ago.

Without the official clemency, those freed before completing their prison terms or

released with suspended sentences are barred from voting or running for public office.

But the order by the government of President Kim Young-Sam, a vociferous anti-graft crusader since his inauguration in February 1993, drew criticism from opposition quarters.

"All of those included in this clemency and restoration of civil rights are masterminds of massive corruption," the main opposition National Congress for New Politics said in a statement.

By granting clemency to those power-hungry criminals, the government proves that its anti-graft drive is simply a political show, not aimed at real reform.

A spokesman for the United Liberal Democrats Party also denounced the move, saying South Korea "has become a country with no social justice and true spirit of law."

Mr. Roh, detained last November on charges of accepting hundreds of millions of dollars in bribes during his 1988-93 term, now awaits sentencing.

"Last week state prosecutors defied a life sentence for Mr. Roh, who has also been charged with mutiny and treason stemming from a 1979 military coup and an army massacre the following year of pro-democracy protesters in the city of Kwangju.

They seek the death penalty for Mr. Roh's predecessor, Chun Doo Hwan, on charges of masterminding the coup and the massacre.

Street violence flares anew in Seoul

SEOUL (AFP) — Fresh clashes broke out here Tuesday as students tried to march to the true village of Panmunjom in an attempt to welcome North Korean counterparts for an outlawed pro-unification rally here, witnesses said.

At least seven riot policemen were injured when some 600 radicals battled with police near a subway station on the unification road leading to Panmunjom in the demilitarized zone dividing the Koreans.

South Korea forbids such contact and roads to Panmunjom were under heavy security Tuesday.

Two South Korean students who defied threats of arrest and flew last week to North Korea were to have returned home via Panmunjom along with North Koreans for the rally, but their homecoming was postponed until Wednesday.

The marchers, mostly from the southwestern city of Kwangju, wielded metal pipes and hurled rocks and firebombs, shattering the windows of 15 police vehicles. Police fired volleys of teargas and brandished clubs.

Clashes also erupted in at least three places outside Yonsei University in western Seoul and outside Dong-Guk University in central Seoul, causing traffic snarls.

Four other universities, including Seoul National University, reported rallies by students numbering between 500 and 1,000 each, who later converged on the Yonsei University by breaking through police lines.

An estimated 10,000 leftist students assembled on the Yonsei University campus for the annual pro-unification rallies and conferences marking the 51st anniversary of liberation from Japanese colonial rule Thursday.

On Monday, scores of people were also injured in clashes between the students and riot police.

The violence came after riot police, armed with teargas launchers, shields and clubs, sealed off the university to prevent leftist students from holding the rallies, outlawed as pro-Pyongyang by Seoul.

Press reports said that 18,000 riot police troops have been deployed here, including 6,000 around Yonsei University.

Students later said two South Korean students who flew to Pyongyang last week in defiance of their own government would return a day late Wednesday because of the police obstruction.

Sri Lankan battle drags on; Tigers deny bombing temple

COLOMBO (AFP) — Long-range fighting raged in northern Sri Lanka Tuesday between government forces and Tamil Tiger guerrillas as the rebels denied bombing a Hindu temple in the eastern town of Batticaloa, officials said.

Security forces fired mortar bombs and artillery against positions of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as sporadic fighting killed five people throughout the island's embattled northeast, the military said.

The LTTE offered stiff resistance to the military advance against their political headquarters at the town of Kilinochchi and one soldier died in an overnight Tiger mortar attack, officials said.

Defence sources confirmed that ferocious counter-attacks by the Tigers had bogged down government soldiers despite the use of artillery guns and close air support from helicopter gunships and Kfir supersonic jets.

The Tigers had said that aerial bombardments had reduced Kilinochchi to rubble with virtually every concrete structure damaged. Some 200,000 civilians in the area have fled further southwards.

Official figures show that 51 soldiers were killed and 70 wounded in the battle for Kilinochchi. The military estimates that more than 300 rebels were killed. However, the Tigers said they lost only 51 fighters killed.

Civil administrators in the region have said that at least 25 civilians were killed and more than 100 wounded in the fighting.

Some 200,000 people have also been

made homeless.

A government spokesman said the LTTE was holding up trucks in areas under their control and preventing the transport of essential food and medicine to the refugees.

"They are creating food shortages by not allowing lorries to come over to (the government-held town of) Vavuniya to take the food stocks," a government spokesman said. "Tigers are using food as a weapon."

In a statement from their London office, the LTTE Tuesday denied that they carried out a bomb attack against a Hindu temple in the eastern coastal town of Batticaloa Sunday, wounding 34 devotees and four policemen.

"This is a heinous act by the Sri Lankan security forces to terrorise the people," the LTTE statement said.

The military blamed the LTTE for the bomb attack, which came during a festival at the Hindu temple.

"The Tigers are trying to destabilise the area and that is why they resort to this type of attack to create a feeling of insecurity among the people," a military spokesman here said.

Troops established control over the eastern region four years ago, confining the rebels to the northern province. However, with the fall of the guerrillas' northern citadel of Jaffna, the militants have stepped up attacks in the east.

More than 50,000 people have been killed in fighting in the LTTE's protracted campaign for a separate state over the past 23 years.

Taiwan plays down leader's U.S. stopover

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan Tuesday played down Vice President Lien Chan's transit stay in the United States, which has riled Beijing, and reaffirmed that there would be no public activities for Mr. Lien in New York.

"This is a simple transit in New York. Vice President Lien will take a rest in New York to adjust to time differences," Taiwan government spokesman Su Chi said in New York. Mr. Su's comments were broadcast on state-funded radio in Taipei.

Mr. Lien is scheduled to leave New York Wednesday to attend the presidential inauguration of Leonel Fernandez in the Dominican Republic, one of only 31 coun-

tries that recognise Taiwan instead of China.

"We have a very very simple schedule in New York. It is purely personal," Mr. Su said on the radio.

China has opposed the stopover, urging Washington "to honour the solemn commitment it has made on the question of Taiwan so as to prevent new damages from occurring in Sino-U.S. relations."

Mr. Lien, who doubles as Taiwan's premier after he was elected vice president in March, was greeted by James Wood, chairman of the American Institute in Taiwan, in Newark, New Jersey, a short drive from New York City, the radio said.

U.S. Republican Party gets boost from Powell

SAN DIEGO (R) — Republicans basked Tuesday in the glow of the man many wanted to run for president, retired General Colin Powell, as their slickly packaged convention unleashed a drumbeat attack on President Bill Clinton.

"It was a great night. We got off to a good start," presidential candidate Bob Dole said happily after the first convention session promoted an image for voters of a party with open arms promising new and visionary leadership for America.

The second day Tuesday features a keynote address by Congresswoman Susan Molinari of New York and an appearance by House Speaker Newt Gingrich, leader of a "Republican revolution" that seized both houses of Congress from the Democrats two years ago.

But it was new Republican recruit Gen. Powell, speaking far longer than others at the convention, who brought cheering delegates to their feet as he recounted his roots in a black immigrant family and his rise to commander of U.S. military forces.

"I come before you this evening as a retired soldier, a fellow citizen who has lived the American dream to the fullest. As someone who believes in that dream and wants that dream to become reality for every American," said Gen. Powell.

"At the same time let us never step back from compassion," he lectured the nearly 2,000 delegates, who are overwhelmingly white and perhaps more conservative than many in their party.

"The message that we must convey to the American people is that we fight for welfare reform. We fight for health care reform and other reforms not just to save money, but because we believe there are better ways to take care of Americans in need than the exhausted programmes of the past."

There were scattered boos when Gen. Powell mentioned his support for a woman's right to an abortion and for affirmative action programmes to help minorities.

Earlier, the convention passed a platform opposed to abortion, and a Los Angeles Times poll indicated that 65 per cent of the delegates were against affirmative action.

Sen. Dole watched Gen. Powell's speech on television and applauded when the retired general addressed the gathering as "my fellow Republicans."

"That's what they want to hear," he said.

Leaving the convention hall Mr. Gingrich shook Gen. Powell's hand, congratulating him on his rousing speech.

Delegates were delighted with the speech. "I don't agree with him on two points, but so what. We can disagree and still be in the same family," said James Meola of Worcester, Massachusetts.

"He's going to be the first black president and I am glad he is a Republican," said one North Dakota woman delegate.

The convention's first day also saw a tear-wrenching tribute to former President



Former first lady Nancy Reagan addresses an evening session of the Republican National Convention after a video tribute to her husband, former President Ronald Reagan was shown Monday at the San Diego Convention Centre (Reuter photo)

Ronald Reagan by his wife Nancy.

Mr. Reagan, who suffers from Alzheimer's disease, was not present.

The first session saw the start of what is sure to be a steady attack on Mr. Clinton during the four-day convention.

Former President Gerald Ford took a side swipe at both the legal troubles that have hit some of Mr. Clinton's business associates and his lack of military service by saying the country needed "a leader of principle, proven integrity... a commander-in-chief who has earned his salutes, a president who would rather tackle tough problems than talk."

Some of the toughest criticism came from former President George Bush, the man Mr. Clinton defeated four years ago, who said, "it breaks my heart when the White House is demeaned, the presidency itself diminished."

"Bob Dole as president will treat the White House with respect, his staff will be beyond even the appearance of impropriety and in the process he will increase respect for the United States of America across the world," he said.

Delegates were keeping a wary eye on the polls.

A USA Today/CNN survey said Sen. Dole had cut the huge gap with Mr. Clinton and was now only nine points behind the president, thanks largely to his selection of former congressman and football star Jack Kemp as his running mate.

But an ABC Television tracking poll released Monday evening still had Sen. Dole 19 points behind Mr. Clinton — a gap that no challenger has overcome in modern times.

The survey measured no noticeable benefit for Sen. Dole since he named Mr. Kemp to the ticket Saturday.

Indonesian activists to be charged with subversion

JAKARTA (R) — The Indonesian military said Tuesday some of the 10 activists arrested this week over last month's riots in Jakarta would be charged with subversion.

Budiman Sudjatmiko, head of the People's Democratic Party (PRD), and nine other activists from the group, which has been blamed for the July 27 riots, were taken into custody Sunday and early Monday.

President Suharto has accused the PRD of attempting to topple the government under the guise of a pro-democracy movement.

"We are going to await developments in the investigation, but of course there would be some of them who will be charged with subversion," military spokesman Brigadier-General Amir Syarifuddin told Reuters.

Subversion carries the death penalty in Indonesia.

Gen. Syarifuddin gave no other details and did not say where the activists were being detained.

The government has already charged an independent labour leader with subversion in the wake of the riots, the worst violence in the city for more than two decades.

Munir, a spokesman for the Legal Aid Institute, told Reuters most of the PRD activists would be charged with subversion. He said the summons issued by the police to some people appearing as witnesses stated Mr. Sudjatmiko and his colleagues were involved in subversive action.

Authorities have questioned several opposition leaders, including the ousted leader of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) Megawati Sukarnoputri, as part of investigations into the riots.

The riots erupted after police stormed the PDI headquarters and evicted Ms. Megawati supporters, who had barricaded themselves inside to prevent the takeover of the building by a government-backed party faction.

The government has said the PRD infiltrated supporters

of MS. Megawati, daughter of Indonesia's late founding President Sukarno.

Meanwhile newspapers reported Tuesday that President Suharto's son-in-law, Brigadier-General Prabowo Subianto, has been promoted to major-general, the youngest officer in the Indonesian military to attain the rank.

Military spokesmen were not available for confirmation.

Gen. Prabowo, 45, who heads the elite Special Forces (Kopassus) section of the military, will continue in that post, but the division has been enlarged, newspapers said.

"The decree on Gen. Prabowo's promotion has been signed and he will officially become the permanent chief of Kopassus," army chief General Hartono was quoted as saying by the Jakarta Post.

Merdeka newspaper said Gen. Prabowo would soon report to armed forces chief General Feisal Tanjung to formally take up the appointment.

Gen. Prabowo is married to Suharto's second daughter Siti Hediati Hariadi. Mr. Suharto, a former army general, has ruled Indonesia with an iron grip since the mid-1960s.

Gen. Prabowo is credited with successfully leading a Kopassus operation in May to release a group of Indonesian and Europeans held hostage by separatist rebels in Irian Jaya, on the western half of New Guinea Island.

Two Indonesian hostages were killed by their captors, but three Indonesians, four Britons and two Germans escaped after the special forces launched the operation.

The Jakarta Post said the elite forces were restructured from three groups to five in June. It gave no other details.

"Prabowo has attracted great attention not only because he is President Suharto's son-in-law but he is viewed as a fast rising star in the military," the Post said.

Spinola, key figure in Portugal's 1974 coup, dies

LISBON (R) — Marshal Antonio De Spínola, the monocled colonial war hero who became Portugal's first president after the 1974 revolution, died after a respiratory illness in a Lisbon hospital early Tuesday, officials said. He was 86.

Spinola, a hero of Portugal's long African colonial wars, became the first president of the new Portugal born of the April 25 coup by young officers in 1974.

Five months later he resigned in protest against the leftist policies of the then ruling military junta and plans for the rapid dismemberment of Portugal's colonial empire.

He fled to Brazil after being accused of involvement in an abortive right-wing coup in March 1975,

and was stripped of his rank of reserve general and expelled from the army.

But he returned to Portugal in August 1976, was reinstated with the rank of marshal and joined the Council of State which advises the president of the republic.

Spinola's book Portugal And The Future, published in February 1974, helped trigger the democratic revolution two months later.

The book proposed a political rather than military solution to the long and costly war Portugal had waged against guerrillas in its African colonies.

In the book, the craggy-faced former cavalry officer called for the African territories of Portuguese Guinea, Angola and Mozam-

bique to join a federal structure in which they would have almost equal status with Portugal.

Spinola did not go so far as to advocate independence for the territories. Nevertheless his views were political dynamite to the then government led by President Americo Thomaz and Prime Minister Marcelo Caetano, which dismissed Spinola from his post as deputy chief of the armed forces general staff.

The dismissal provoked a major military and political crisis which put Spinola at the centre of power in Lisbon and launched a new era in which Portuguese leaders promised democracy after nearly half a century of authoritarian right-wing rule.

The young officers who staged the April 25 coup installed Spinola as head of a seven-man military junta of national salvation. He assumed power on May 15, 1974.

In its early days the new government disbanded the hated secret police, freed political prisoners, allowed political exiles to return to Portugal, and abolished press censorship.

In Africa, Portuguese Guinea gained its independence as Guinea-Bissau, and Mozambique and Angola were set on the road to self government.

Antonio Sebastião Ribeiro De Spínola was born in Estremoz, south Portugal, on April 11, 1910, the son of an inspector-general of finance during the 40-year dictatorship of Antonio De Oliveira Salazar.

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Over with the subsidies

WHETHER IT is a calculated political risk or an outright political gamble that the state took on Monday by lifting direct subsidies on food and animal feed prices without waiting in vain for a consensus to emerge on tackling the issue is not an unimportant question in Jordan today. But it seems to be more important to political pundits, government watchers and government detractors than to the government itself. What seems to have been the question for the prime minister and his team all along was not whether a decision to lift the subsidies had to be taken but rather how it would be least painful for fellow Jordanians when actually implemented. The quintessential need for making the decision was never in contention, as far as the government — and dare we say many others as well — was concerned. For only through taking the last dose of the IMF-prescribed medicine was there going to be a true economic recovery, or any recovery at all, painful and agonising as the whole programme, and not just the last step, indeed was.

The prime minister's courage and determination to do what he believes is in the best interest of Jordan cannot be overlooked either by foes or friends. The opposition parties and those who joined ranks with them in resisting this particular change, should at least acknowledge and recognise the fact that Mr. Kabariti was willing to put both his political career and the fate of his government on the line in order to do what is right for the country. The opposition and its allies, on the other hand, could claim for themselves the moral high ground, but nothing they could say or do would deter him from pursuing the goal of seeing the economic recovery programme to its logical conclusion and successful end.

Be that as it may, we now have a new situation to grapple with. One where there might no longer be a cross-party, general framework agreement on the IMF-prescribed programme (as has been evident from the emergence of the 24-member "total opposition" group and the other 32-member "half-way, compromise" committee in the Lower House); where more and bigger socio-economic problems pose themselves; where real hardships by the poor and needy amongst us can be faced; and where, at the same time, Jordan can begin to reap the fruits of the hard work that it has done in order to stand on its own feet, meet its commitments and have excellent relations with the rest of the world.

The government, we think, took the right decision under the circumstances, for even if there are problems and obstacles on the way, the end result is that Jordan will have succeeded in reducing its foreign debts and corrected basic structural deformities in its economy, with all this entails in fighting corruption, waste and smuggling.

But while Mr. Kabariti himself deserves to be praised for his persistence and consistency, and above all congratulated on the most valuable support that he received from His Majesty the King in this endeavour, the government can ill-afford to relax now that the decision has been made and implemented. The authorities need to monitor the implementation of the decision for any loopholes remaining in the compensation and the new pricing systems. In this regard, a mechanism for receiving complaints, verifying them and taking corrective action should be put in motion, as indeed has been proposed through a joint government-parliamentary committee.

More importantly, the government needs to build on its bold decision and move to correct other imbalances in the economy. Based on the experience with bread and fodder and other basic commodities, the government should gradually but surely pull out from all strictly private-sector activity. The government has taken some modest steps in that direction but many more are needed if the economy is to fully recover. Furthermore, it is with government bureaucracy and the legal system that reform should follow. And that will be neither a new nor easy undertaking. The first Royal Commission to reform civil service was formed in 1982. Numerous committees have since been formed, but without any tangible results. Likewise with the delivery of justice in our country. No more time can be wasted if the moves towards effective economic and social policies are to be fruitful.

Surely a government that can lift bread subsidies and emerge intact could carry still more reforms. Monday's resolution was a giant step. Will we see more steps in the right direction?

Washington Watch

Our continuing dialogue with Clinton

By Dr. James Zogby

ON AUG. 6 I had the privilege to lead a delegation of Arab American leaders to a meeting with President Bill Clinton and officials of the National Security Council (NSC) in the Roosevelt Room of the White House.

Our discussion with the president was preceded by a longer exchange between our delegation and Samuel Berger, Deputy Assistant to the president for National Security Affairs, and Mark Parris, special assistant to the president and director of the NSC's office for Near East and South Asian Affairs. The president then joined the meeting for the next 30 minutes.

While the entire session was "off the record" and, therefore, precludes the use of direct quotes, at a press conference following the meeting, attended by 21 of the Arab American leaders, we unanimously agreed that the president was open and sincere in his comments and we were at once impressed by the depth of his understanding of our concerns and pleased by his commitment to work with our community.

During the 90 minute meeting, we raised several issues, including:

- Our concern for the future of the peace process in the wake of the election of Benjamin Netanyahu — especially emphasising our concerns over the possibility of new settlement and road construction, Israeli policies in Jerusalem, and the deepening hardships endured by Palestinians as a result of the continuing economic blockade of the West Bank and Gaza.

- Our deep and continuing hurt over the failure of the administration to respond adequately to the suffering experienced by the people of Lebanon during the Israeli assault in April, and our concern that Israel was attempting to use Lebanon as a bargaining chip in the negotiating process.

- Our concern with the delay in reaching an agreement to implement U.N. Security Council Resolution 986 and the continuing hardship of the people of Iraq. We made clear that we did not want to see the regime of Saddam Hussein benefit from the situation, but we hoped that assistance could be forthcoming to the innocent people of that country.

- Our concern that anti-terrorism legislation might be used to unfairly target law-abiding members of the Arab American and American Muslim communities.

- Our concern with the growing anti-immigrant sentiment in the Congress reflected in both the recently passed Welfare Reform legislation and currently debated immigration reform bill. Both could have a negative impact by denying social service benefits to legal immigrants to the U.S.

Following a detailed and thoughtful discussion, we left the meeting assured that the administration understood these concerns and confident that they were working to resolve them.

This meeting was part of a continuing dialogue that this administration has had with Arab Americans. This dialogue has included two group meetings with the president, a number of private discussions that many of us have had with the president during the past several months, meetings with the vice-president, cabinet members and the president's national security staff, and an exchange of letters between myself and the president.

While not at liberty to directly quote the comments made on August sixth by either President Clinton or Mr. Berger, I can share several observations about their responses to our concerns culled from our own continuing dialogue.

1) **Palestinians and the peace process**
The administration remains committed to the establishment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. In no way has their policy changed as a result of the recent elections in Israel. In fact, they are working to press the Netanyahu government to

move forward and to honour all the commitments that the Israeli government has made to the Palestinians in Oslo I and II.

They are following closely the internal discussions and manoeuvring taking place within the new Israeli governing coalition. While wary of extremist elements that seek to set back the peace process, they also see some positive signs in recent weeks.

There is a sense that some of what the Netanyahu government is saying and doing is for domestic consumption in Israel. At the same time there are some positive statements that have been made with reference to honouring the Oslo agreements and easing the economic hardship of the Palestinians. And even though some negative statements have been made regarding Jerusalem and settlements, these have yet to be followed up by specific negative actions.

Israel has been told on a number of occasions, both publicly and privately, that the Clinton administration views settlements as an obstacle to peace — an unhelpful impediment and possibly provocative.

With regard to Jerusalem, the administration has repeated its position that no action should be taken that would be provocative or might disrupt the peace process.

Even though this year's Democratic Party Platform repeats the position taken in 1992 that "Jerusalem is the capital of the state of Israel," the White House has authorised its spokespeople to respond to questions regarding the platform by noting that while this may be the position taken by the party, the president's position remains unchanged. That position is:

"Jerusalem is one of the most sensitive and volatile issues in the peace process. I remain convinced that it is unwise for the United States to take actions that could be interpreted as prejudicing matters, such as Jerusalem, which Israel and the Palestinians themselves have formally agreed to discuss only in the context of direct, permanent status negotiations."

At the same time, the administration continues to press for an end to the blockade of the Palestinian autonomous territories and is urging donor countries to be more forthcoming in providing needed economic assistance to the Palestinian Authority.

In a very telling comment made before a gathering of ethnic leaders who met at the White House last month, the president expressed his feeling about both the new paradigm established by the peace process and the need to provide greater help to the Arabs who have made peace. He said, "...there's a peace process going. But there are still desperate economic problems in Gaza and the West Bank. And as I've told everyone, when this peace process started three and a half years ago, the United States had an interest in the Middle East, when the Bush administration started the Madrid talks. But we had an obligation to the security of Israel. Today the United States has an interest in peace in the Middle East, an obligation to the security of Israel, and an obligation to the peace-loving Arabs who have stuck their necks out and risked their lives to try to promote the peace."

2) **Lebanon and Syrian tracks**
The administration has repeatedly made it clear that it is strongly committed to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. This is the first administration in many years to publicly state its commitment to U.N. Security Council Resolution 425. The president did so two times in his public comments following his April meeting with President Hrawi.

The administration says that a prosperous and independent Lebanon is necessary for the prosperity and stability of the entire region. At the same time, the administration insists that there must be forward movement on both the Lebanese and

Syrian tracks for the peace process to succeed.

The administration made an effort since April to express its regrets for not having responded in a more timely and balanced manner to the suffering of the people in Lebanon during the Israeli attack.

In retrospect, it seems clear that the administration had made a tactical decision regarding the Israeli elections and the future of the peace process. On a number of occasions since April when speaking with Arab Americans, the president has spoken of his shock over the loss of so many Lebanese lives. Those who participated in the Aug. 6 discussion with the president left the meeting convinced of the administration's sincerity in this matter.

3) **U.N. Security Council Resolution 986**

We were told that a decision with regard to implementing Resolution 986 was imminent, and on the next day (Aug. 7) the U.S. did in fact announce that it was satisfied with the monitoring provisions and would go forward with approval for the oil-for-food resolution.

4) **Anti-terrorism**

Our delegation thanked the president for cautioning media and law-enforcement against jumping to conclusions after the TWA Flight 800 tragedy and the Atlanta bombing. He and others in the administration have frequently reminded the nation of the unfair accusations made against Arabs and Muslims in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing and the impact that this rush to judgement had on our community.

The regular access to the White House the administration has continued to provide to Arab Americans and American Muslims had enhanced the stature of both communities and given them greater confidence to function in the U.S. political mainstream.

5) **Immigration**

The president has on a number of occasions spoken out against the growing anti-immigrant sentiment in the U.S. He opposed California proposition 187. While he did agree to sign the Welfare Reform bill passed by the Congress, he has made clear his intention to have its anti-immigrant provisions overturned in the next Congress. The president also has expressed his intention to veto the immigration bill that is currently being debated in Congress. While supporting efforts to stem the flow of illegal immigration, the administration cannot accept legislation that punishes the children of illegal immigrants by denying them education or health care.

The Aug. 6 meeting with the president was preceded by a two hour planning meeting that was attended by 22 of the 25 Arab American participants. At the meeting we developed our agenda of issues and forged a consensus position on how to frame our concerns. Given the diversity of the group, this was a significant development. The success of this effort gave our delegation a new sense of optimism about the future of our community and our ability to work together as a unified political force.

The 25 Arab American participants were selected by the White House Office of Public Liaison to reflect both geographic and political diversity. The Arab Americans came from 12 national organisations and 10 states. In an effort to expand the opportunity for more groups and individuals to meet the president, two-thirds of this group had not been present at earlier White House meetings.

This continuing dialogue with the president and his administration marks a new stage in the growth of the Arab American community's involvement in U.S. political life, one which the White House appreciates and recognises. It is a development of which we are proud, and on which we are eager to build.

LETTERS

Constructive criticism required

To the Editor:

REGARDING THE articles written by Mr. Ali Kassay in the Jordan Times 31/7/96 "Flaming Games" and Dr. Yusuf Mansur's "Golden Entertainment" on 7/8/1996, I find it pathetic and yet oddly entertaining to read such articles from two self-appointed elites, one a columnist and the second a Ph.D. holder, who took it upon themselves to be judge and jury of Jordan Television's (JTV) coverage of the Atlanta Olympic Games.

One chose to depict the games by generalising that "watching other people playing games is grim enough" and by satirising those who presented them. In the very least, it would have been appreciated to comment on those games, not for any personal gains but out of personal initiative and love for these events. Maybe Mr. Kassay's sharp, omniscient pen could advise JTV on the proper conduct towards commentary on sport events since he is so good at pointing out his grim thoughts on sports in general. What happened to credibility through objectivity? Maybe a note of "thank you" would be enough for those so-called bad and uneloquent presenters who spent 24 hours a day toiling on these games. Perhaps such appreciation does not fit in Mr. Kassay's vocabulary.

Certainly not every one of these commentators has a Ph.D. nor do they have satellite channels, nor are they suave, eloquent and well-versed as the Europeans whom Mr. Kassay and Dr. Mansur covet. But, we, local viewers, would appreciate the benefit of the doubt, that we like to watch and decide what to watch not based on the personal preference of these gentlemen. It would have been beneficial for the viewers if those two distinguished, dissatisfied and discontented gentlemen had been among those few bad commentators who, at least, contributed something to the games. They did not sit in their houses lamenting, but dedicated their time and energy reporting on the events. These volunteers certainly deserve our appreciation. Maybe Mr. Kassay could have shared and added his knowledge to that of those

so-called, bad commentators instead of criticising, translating and satirising. Where were the Kassays and Mansurs when JTV needed them since they seem to know so much about TV commentators? If these two elite gentlemen and others like them would stop writing and refrain from choking us with their personal biases and apathy and address the issues to the public we would all benefit. How can we progress if we keep reading about the negative without objectivity and due merit? Was the coverage of the games so negative? Was there nothing positive nor constructive? Perhaps televising the Olympic Games on JTV was not a giant step for mankind but certainly it was a small step for JTV to be able to televise such an event with all it entails. It was an effort to be appreciated. I humbly thank the Kassays and the Mansurs for their constructive criticism and suggest the import of foreign commentators to please the dissatisfied, discontented few.

Nasser Mirza
Amman

Privatisation is the solution

To the Editor:

I READ with interest "The story of Telecommunications in Jordan" (Aug. 10, 1996), and although we were slow to start development in this sector, the story is certainly one of success. Privatisation will definitely prove that we are on the right track, as it has proved itself to be the most effective remedy for any ailing services sector wherever it has been tried. However, in order to succeed, the private sector has to be given a fair opportunity to execute its projects without hindrance and without being construed as a government department having to abide by every red-tape idea ever conceived. The private sector can and will do its share provided it is given the freedom to move as quickly and efficiently as its capabilities allow.

Regarding Jordan Mobile Telephone Services (JMTS), and to set the record straight, a couple of points must be mentioned:

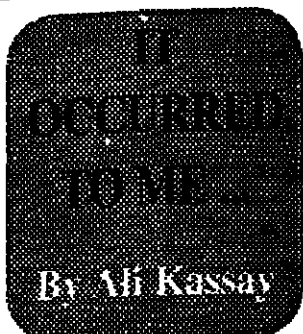
1. Our network now covers the areas of Amman, Salt, Madaba, Zarqa and Aqaba. We have also introduced coverage to some areas in the north, especially in and around Irbid and Mafrqa, during the past month. The coverage will soon expand to include the Jordan Valley and the areas between Amman and Ramtha. We forecast the completion of the expansion before the end of September of this year. This puts us at least one year ahead of the schedule stipulated in our license.

2. Although our license provides for revenue sharing with the Ministry of Finance (20 per cent), the government is guaranteed payments totalling JD 38 million over the first five years from the issuance of the licence, regardless of the revenue of the company. Of this amount we have already paid JD 21 million.

As for the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission, I believe its establishment did not come a day too soon. I trust it has a tremendous task ahead of it, one that can be efficiently undertaken only if all concerned parties offered their support. But it is very important to mention that by law, the minister of post and telecommunications is the chairman of the board of the commission, and at the same time, and also by law, he is the chairman of Telecommunications Corporation (TCC), which, technically, from the inception of the commission, has become an operator to be regulated by the commission. This fact makes the transparency of the commission questionable.

All in all, we at JMTS are committed to serve our 20,000 subscribers as efficiently as possible, providing them with a service that was very much needed. We hope to continue furnishing our services to our subscribers with assistance and support from the minister and other government organisations in the coming years.

Mithkal Asfour
General Manager
Jordan Mobile Telephone Services
Amman



Give us
this day
our daily
bread

A CONTROVERSY of considerable importance appears to have been decisively resolved yesterday, with the announcement that the price of bread will be set henceforth at 250 fils a kilo. Though I admire decisive action as a general rule, I cannot help lamenting the end of the controversy. We rarely have one quite so juicy. You see, very often people are too shy to discuss controversial topics, and things come to pass before one has had the opportunity to savour the debate.

With the price of bread, things were different. Everybody had an opinion, and everyone expressed himself freely and with eloquence. Taxi drivers talked of nothing else while they ferried people to and fro. Barbers enlightened clients with their views as they trimmed the straggling tufts of hair around bald patches. Officials explained the merits of the move, and, disagreeing with Shakespeare that a Rose by any name smells just as sweet, they bestowed on the price hike the novel title: "Reorganisation of the system of subsidies." But all good things come to an end, which makes it important to rush in with an analysis of the possible outcome of this move, before the next economic decision is announced, causing the question of bread prices to be deleted from the collective memory banks.

Now, the average salary in Jordan is about JD 100, which is around 60% of the minimum wage in some European countries. In real terms, should Mr. Householder uses his honestly-earned salary exclusively for buying bread, and given the average family size of 6.8 members, each member can consume about two kilos of bread per day, and nothing else, which is compatible with the consumption pattern of many Jordanian middle-class families even before the readjustment. This being the case, Jordanians might start to negotiate their salaries and be paid not in dinars, but in kilograms of bread. The advantage then is that government officials will soon see the economic advantage of instituting a bakery as part of the accounts department, which will help immeasurably the fight against unemployment.

In terms of economics, the wealth of the country would be measured in terms of a new indicator. The Kilo of Bread per Day (KBD). The KBD, will soon gain international recognition as a more pertinent indicator of wealth in Third World economies, than many other indicators adapted from Western economies and based on the peculiar consumption patterns there. In due course, the KBD will form the basis for measuring the relative, absolute, and abject poverty lines. Such a breakthrough may be of sufficient importance to earn Jordan its first Nobel prize.

Given all this, I add my humble voice to the chorus that sings the praises of the new system of bread subsidies, as a sagacious move which will bring untold benefit to Jordan and Jordanians. The problem is to convince the other four and a half million citizens who whinge and moan instead of looking on the bright side of things.



Raising bread

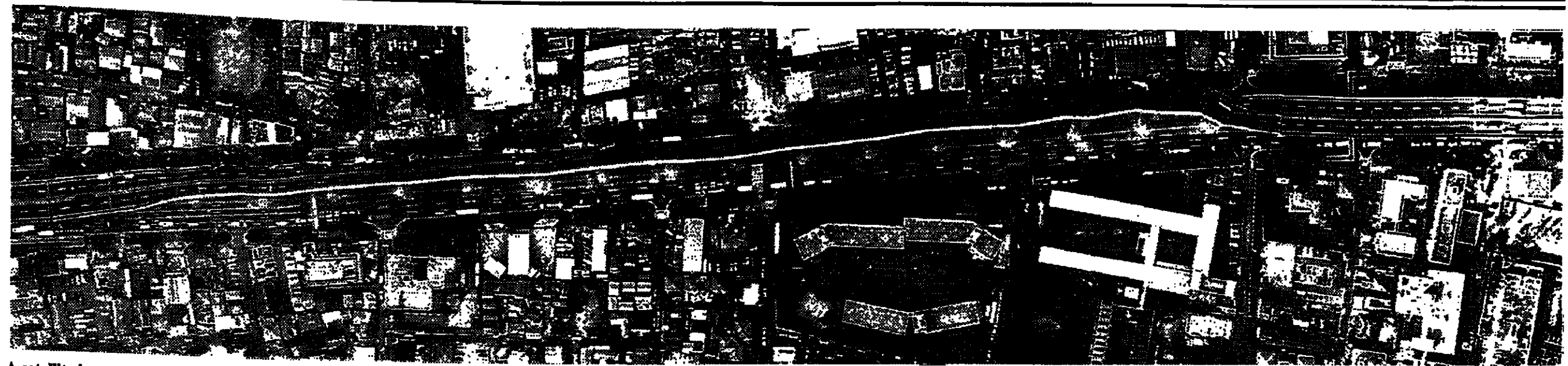
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But the government's move to raise the price of bread is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it will help to reduce the government's budget deficit by saving the money it spends on subsidising bread. On the other hand, it will increase the cost of living for many Jordanians, especially those on low incomes.

It is true that the government has a right to raise the price of bread, but it must also take steps to protect the poor and needy from the impact of the move. This could be done by increasing social welfare payments and providing food aid to those in need.

In the end, the decision to raise the price of bread is a difficult one. It is one that the government must make with care and sensitivity, taking into account the needs and wishes of all Jordanians.

So far, however, the government's move seems to be a sensible one. It is a move that will bring about a more equitable distribution of resources and a more stable economy. It is a move that we should all support.



A satellite image shows the damage caused by the earthquake last year in Kobe, Japan, including a toppled flyover (right)

Now you can watch Big Brother

By Edward Helmore and Robin McKie

TO ISRAEL they are a threat to its rocky hold over Arab territory. China is upset because its suppression in Tibet could be exposed, while Turkey fears its assaults on Kurds may be revealed.

Suddenly, commercial satellites are ruffling international feathers. And the particular focus of this fury is a new generation of privately financed spy probes, each capable of seeing objects only a yard across from the depths of space.

In the next few months, three of these new-generation, high-resolution satellites are to be blasted into space — launches that will raise critical issues of national security, individual privacy and the public's right to access information.

At the heart of the problem lies the cold war technology of deep-space monitoring of Earth, recently privatised by Bill Clinton's administration to maintain the United States' lead in commercial satellite expertise. The high-resolution sensors of U.S. spy probes — whose images were once placed before the eyes of security officials only — are now to become available for anyone with bucks to spare. The concept will revolutionise public monitoring of the environment, the scrutinising of peace agreements — and the gathering of television news. Experts predict the space imagery industry will be worth \$6 billion by 2000.

Want to pinpoint the source of Russian river pollution spilling into the Baltic? Or do you want a picture of a bomb blast that military officials will not let you near? No problem. In each case, images supplied by companies such as EarthWatch, due to launch

its first spy satellite later this summer, and Space Imaging Inc and Orbimage, which are both due to put satellites into orbit next year, will meet those needs.

"It's a technology of freedom for enlightened countries but a tool of terror for closed societies," says Mark Brender, a producer at ABC television's Pentagon bureau.

"We're entering an age of transparency and governments are uncomfortable with it. Those who embrace it will be stronger."

What is causing unease is the unsurpassed power of the cameras and sensors on board the new satellites. Experts say these instruments will be able to take photographs with at least 100 times more detail than their predecessors.

Take Space Imaging's \$500 million eye in the sky. It will be locked into a sun-synchronous orbit (orbiting only over ground and sea

that is in day-light), a path that will allow the satellite to provide an image of any site on Earth once every three days. Photographs will cost as little as \$100 per square mile of the targeted area.

Designed for the commercial market, these high-resolution images will benefit a wide variety of civilian purposes: from agricultural managers to urban planners, construction companies and public utilities. Such uses do not raise eyebrows.

What is causing concern is the idea that traditional sovereign rights are about to be redefined. According to the United Nations' "open skies" policy, supported by the U.S., countries may still own the airspace above their territory. On the other hand, they cannot limit the operation of imaging satellites in space.

Hence Israel's fury over the threat that its Arab neighbours could use

imagery bought from Earth-Watch or Space Imaging to target missiles against it with pinpoint accuracy. Its diplomats are lobbying the White House to limit the resolution of pictures taken over its territory to 10 feet on the grounds of national security.

Similarly, bird's-eye views of China's suppression in Tibet, Indonesia's campaigns against the East Timorese and assaults by Turkey's forces against Kurds are also causing international nervousness.

Part of the concern lies with fears that the media will be freed from their dependence on government information during international crises and will be able to collect pictures so detailed that they will resemble views from a helicopter ride.

Mr. Brender's contention that it is a technology of freedom and transparency may seem pious. Still, the

peaceful uses of spy satellite technology have precedents. President Lyndon Johnson once said that the first U.S. spy probes — which revealed that the Soviet Union was not stockpiling H-bombs and missiles with anything like the ardour that American generals had claimed — had justified the cost of the entire space programme. Experts such as Arthur C Clarke agree, and argue that the availability of spy-satellite technology will promote international stability.

Neighbouring countries will be less quick to threaten each other when troop movements or missile silos are visible to all.

"The free availability of space imagery will have a stabilising effect on world affairs," says Bryan Webster, of Space Imaging.

"The less possible it is for countries to be surprised, the less potential there is for conflict."

To the U.S. media, the

Intelligence agencies are likely to be the largest purchasers of high-resolution images from these new probes. Iraq will buy pictures of Saudi Arabia, Iran will seek those of Israel, and India and Pakistan will purchase images of each other.

The biggest loser is likely to be the U.S. government, which once used its spy satellites to maintain a huge military advantage over rivals — a superiority used with devastating success in the Gulf war.

Fearing it will lose this key advantage, the licences granted to spy-satellite operators by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration since 1994 include clauses giving the State Department the right to restrict broadcast data from a certain area when national security or foreign policy interests "may be compromised."

wording of these regulations is too vague and amounts to "prior restraint" of their constitutional rights. Instead, they propose that the media should be free to impose self-censorship when there is a "clear and present danger" to security.

Critics say a state such as Israel could easily be seen as a foreign policy interest and, if restrictions were allowed, this would set a precedent that could lead to other blackouts areas to accommodate the interests of the political party in power.

"The State Department's notion of a foreign policy problem would mean that any time a client state says it will be upset by this kind of imaging then restrictions will be introduced," says David Bartlett of the Radio-Television News Directors' Association.

The Observer

Raising bread prices a calculated step

(continued from page 1)

great as that of floating bread prices. While the government came under severe criticism for its policy on Iraq, which was initially seen as its primary mandate, and while its relations with Israel after the return of the right to power was the subject of many condemnations by the opposition, it was only over subsidies that it came close to facing a vote of no-confidence.

Forty-one deputies, including members of blocs that are represented in the Cabinet, had signed a statement expressing their rejection of the move. Opposition deputies threatened a no-confidence vote, and initial indications were that the people would resist it. Some even warned that raising bread prices would bring down the government.

But two months of thorough, at times tense, debate and what one official described as a close monitoring of the development of the people's reaction to the decision enabled the government to survive the move almost unscathed.

It is still too early to say, however, that the government can be assured of no negative reactions to its decision, with at least 24 members of the Lower House still speaking vocally against the government which broke the consensus of a group of another 32 lawmakers which was negotiating the move with it, and a number of opposition parties saying they will continue to protest the decision. Disturbances could develop, observers say, and not necessarily under the banner of the opposition. The riots of 1989, which followed the raising of fuel prices, set a precedent of unorganised violent public reaction to new economic hardships. People have not yet felt the impact of floating the prices and only after the decision is implemented will it be possible to say that the government has heard the end of the bread story, observers say.

So far, however, the government can claim success in handling what is seen as a highly sensitive move. A number of crucial factors were instrumental in guaranteeing this orderly turn of events, with both the government and the opposition taking credit for that — the government for its hard work in selling the move and the need for it as well as access to information inaccessible to others; the opposition for failing to provide an alternative.

Despite a clear initial confusion in announcing the move, the government managed to put the pieces back together, flooding the people with information aimed at showing that national interests make the step inevitable.

What the government eventually did was explain in detail why it had to hike bread prices, working hard at the same time to convince the public that they will suffer no extra burdens as a result.

The Kingdom, said Mr. Kabarti in a press conference he held to explain the issue last month, has all but completed the economic reform programme agreed upon with the IMF. If Jordan receives a clean bill of health, he said, the country will be eligible for grants and credit facilities to set up projects that could jump-start the economy. But if the IMF rules that Jordan did not implement the requirements of the reform programme, the country will not be eligible for support from the donor countries. That would mean big trouble for a country so strapped for cash and in dire need for foreign investment and financing, he said.

The issue of subsidies, said the prime minister, would be the one on which the IMF would base its assessment of the country, which has carried out the reform programme in a manner the IMF has found acceptable.

The amount of funds the budget allocated for subsidies, JD 38 million, would not cover half of the actual cost of the subsidies, due to the increase of wheat prices on the international market, the prime minister said. Maintaining the subsidies, he said, would mean incurring a budget deficit which the IMF simply will not allow to happen if the Kingdom is to stay on its good side.

Other government officials said that the country has already been rewarded for deciding to end the subsidies. A donors' meeting in Paris in July pledged \$1 billion in project financing over a period of three years, Japan, which has reportedly insisted on lifting subsidies, is negotiating providing the Kingdom with a \$90 million soft loan that could go into financing the budget deficit.

These positive achievements, among others, say government officials, rule out sacrificing the reform programme in order to keep the subsidies out of fear of the reaction to the

move.

Officials say that investment in the first seven months is higher than that of the whole of last year. They also say that the rapprochement in relations with the Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia to which the King ended "a successful visit" the day the bread price hikes were announced, will lead to the reopening of the Gulf markets to Jordanian goods and labour. That will mean an increased economic activity that could help people cope with the higher cost of living, they say.

More importantly, officials say, they could no longer procrastinate in heeding the IMF demand for ending the subsidies. The programme ends next year and lifting the subsidies was the last requirement. Previous governments have implemented other reforms under the programme. The government of Abdul Salam Al Majali, which shouldered the responsibility of signing the peace treaty with Israel in October 1994, introduced the sales tax. It could not also raise bread prices, its members argue. Neither could the government of Sharif (now Prince) Zeid Ben Shaker do so after making its own difficult decisions of raising the sales tax from five to 10 per cent and ending the economic boycott of Israel. So the task of lifting subsidies on bread and animal feed was left for the Kabarti government, which says the move will only lead to six per cent inflation instead for the four per cent projected for this year even though other estimates put the projected inflation at double digit figures. But government officials say that the compensation the people will offer to the people

will partially offset this increase in the cost of living. But the people wanted more. Their rejection of the decision was paralleled by demands for cutting down government expenditure and signs of extravagance which many argued were wasting a considerable amount of public funds. There were questions about officials' trips abroad, about the cars they drive, about government giveaways to certain people and groups.

The government appeared to understand the impact, if only the psychological one, of adopting some austerity measures. Government officials, through press leaks and other means, explained that even if the government cut its travel expenditure by half, if it sold all the top-of-the-line Mercedes Benz ministers drive, the saved amount would be marginal in offsetting the deficit resulting from the subsidies bill. But along with this argument, the government announced measures to cut its spending.

All this happened as the mainstream press generally supported the government, which, through the information minister and other Cabinet members, succeeded in having its views prevail in the press coverage of the matter. While the information minister kept on providing the press with figures and arguments about the need to rechannel the subsidies and the government's determination to compensate citizens for the price hike, the opposition had no sufficient reservoir of information and research to counter the official views. Also, the opposition did not have the same leverage the government has with the major news organisations.

But these difficulties were admitted by the government,

which told the people that national interests dictate that the burden is shared.

And the government did not, in any case, expect the move to provoke a public outcry. Since, officials maintain, every effort was made to compensate the citizens for the expected rise in prices and to put in place an elaborate system where compensations are promptly channelled to citizens. Over and above this, government supporters argued, no unrest should be expected because the situation today is different from 1989, when riots broke out over increases announced by the government in petrol prices. Unlike in 1989, the political environment is much more relaxed after six years of the democratisation process.

Political parties are operating in public and are in agreement with the government that unruly expression of opposition to the move cannot resolve the issue. Parliament and news conference were the forum for debating, and arguing over the matter, and the government appeared willing to take all the heat that it could face in such platforms. Besides, the dinar

has remained steady in seven years, and the country has done well already in achieving reasonable rates of growth and low inflation rates. "An extra two percentage points in inflation figures this year will not exactly invite trouble," said an official. We expect even the opposition to admit that it did not do extremely well in opposing our action."

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China, the second biggest

OAPEC said consumption in member states was projected to grow to around 3.9 million bpd in 2000 from 3.2 million bpd in 1995.

the region. An average \$142 million annually have been pumped into the UAE in direct foreign capital during 1991-1994, the report showed.


liquefied natural gas (LNG) project which Yemen is planning to develop with total and other world firms. Good news for the Sana'a government comes with Hunt's development of the Jannah block initial production of some 15,000 bpd.

Progress in talks with Saudi Arabia aimed at resolving a border dispute and offering foreign firms better oil production sharing and cost recovery schemes has helped the investment climate in the country's oil sector, the sources said.

GCC states—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)—produce around 13.4 million bpd, nearly one fifth of the world's total crude sup-

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by Henri Arnold and Mike Argiron

I've never even had a ticket!

A simple line drawing of a car, possibly a taxi, with a speech bubble coming from the driver's side. The speech bubble contains the text 'I've never even had a ticket!'. The car is facing right.

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EMU deal cost Britain

LONDON (AP)—One by Britain to the world's single currency and to a new global currency. Business leaders have warned that Britain wishes to economic and monetary union. The PM in 1999 government would need to place to restrictive and monetary policies to meet the Maastricht criteria. "Extensive" study by accountants and lawyers said.

Policies to meet the Maastricht conditions on inflation and public debt could cost three per cent of national income, 500,000 jobs by the end of the decade, Ernst & Young calculated, using the economic model as




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Jordan's NOPAIN becomes first Arab medicine to relieve U.S. headaches

By Ghida Aljuburi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Hikma Pharmaceuticals, a leading Jordanian pharmaceutical company, held an opening ceremony Monday to celebrate the company's first export of pharmaceuticals to the U.S. from an Arab country.

Established in 1978 in Amman, Hikma is quickly becoming a multinational pharmaceutical firm with subsidiaries in Portugal, Tunisia and Egypt as well as the United States said Financial Manager Nayef Kassis.

Company Products include antibiotics, cardiovascular drugs, anti-rheumatics, tranquilizers, analgesics, anti-diabetics and spasmodics, hormones, and a range of cough and cold preparations. Vice-President Mazen Darwazah said the drug that was exported was an anti-inflammatory preparation effective in headaches, musculoskeletal pain, post operative pain and rheumatic diseases.

The prescription drug has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It is a naproxen sodium analgesic with the commercial name of NOPAIN and will enter into the generic market in competition with the American brand name ANAPROX manufactured by - Syntax Pharmaceuticals.

At this time, only one of its drugs will be exported to

the United States, but officials feel that "this is the beginning and we hope to export more (different) drugs in the future" said Technical Vice President Ibrahim Jalal.

Shipments will start in late August and will be delivered to three laboratories in the United States: URL, Moore and Westward (the Hikma subsidiary in New Jersey). Government-approved distribution channels will function privately with the first shipment priced at \$150,000.

This being their first experience working within the American market, the company feels that the drug will be successful "because of the way drugs are prescribed in the United States," said Dr. Jalal.

Prescriptions taken to the pharmacy by the patient only specify the scientific name leaving the patient the option of purchasing the brand name or the generic which can be about 40 per cent cheaper.

The ceremony was held at Hikma's main plant in Amman and attended by Health Minister Aref Bataineh and the Director of the Ministry's Drug Directorate Maisa Al Saket. Dr. Bataineh announced that since a Jordanian pharmaceutical company has climbed to standards allowing its products to become FDA-approved, he hopes that it will maintain these



Yahay, an employee with Jordan's leading Hikma Pharmaceutical Company, pastes labels in Amman Monday on the first ever consignment of drugs exported by an Arab pharmaceutical company to the U.S. market. Hikma succeeded in getting approval from the U.S. FDA to export a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug, a breakthrough for the local drug firm which targets an increase in exports of a wide range of drug products to the U.S. market by the year 2000.

high standards now that it is part of the international market promoting not only the Jordanian pharmaceutical industry but representing Arab involvement in the health care arena worldwide.

According to Ms. Saket, the significance of having a drug exported to the United States and what this means to Jordan is that "the quality of Jordanian drugs is equal to that of American products, because any drug

exported to America has to be FDA approved. This approval means quality." Hikma officials see this step as further Arab penetration into the American market in business, industry and health care.

EMU deadline of 1999 would cost Britain 500,000 jobs — study

LONDON (AFP) — A drive by Britain to be a founder of a single currency would cost half a million jobs by 2000, business consultants have warned.

"If Britain wishes to join economic and monetary union (EMU) in 1999, the government would need to put in place restrictive fiscal and monetary policies in order to meet the Maastricht convergence criteria," the study by accountants Ernst and Young said.

Policies to meet the Maastricht conditions on inflation and public deficits could cost three per cent of national income and 500,000 jobs by the end of the decade, Ernst and Young calculated, using the same economic model as the

British Treasury.

The government would need to raise the basic rate of income tax by at least four pence in the pound, and public spending would need to be "strictly controlled" in order to reduce the public deficit to below the required three per cent of gross domestic product (GDP).

Britain's public deficit amounted to six per cent of GDP in 1995, according to official figures calculated in line with Maastricht norms.

Interest rates would have to rise to at least eight or nine per cent, "to keep inflation down to the European average and to keep the pound more stable against the Deutschmark than has been the case over

the last few years."

The Bank of England's benchmark interest rate is currently 5.75 per cent.

If the government maintained its current policies, British economic growth should accelerate from 2.2 per cent in 1996 to 3.3 per cent in 1997.

"Falling interest rates, tax cuts and improving export market conditions should revitalise the economic environment over the next 18 months and allow unemployment to fall below two million," Ernst and Young said.

At the 1991 Maastricht treaty, Britain negotiated an opt-out clause allowing it to choose to join or remain outside a single European currency.

U.S. Census Bureau : Asian companies' growth doubles national average

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Companies owned by people of Asian and Pacific Island descent are launched at more than twice the rate of all firms in the United States, according to the Census Bureau.

Between 1987 and 1992, the number of Asian and Pacific Islander firms grew by 56 per cent, compared with the U.S. average of 26 per cent, the bureau has said.

And while sales generated by all U.S. firms grew 67 per cent — from \$2 trillion to \$3.3 trillion — receipts at companies operated by Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders shot up 163 per cent to \$96 billion, the bureau reported.

Average annual sales at

Asian and Pacific Islander companies were \$159,000 in 1992, about 40 per cent higher than five years earlier, according to the census report. The U.S. average was \$193,000, while the overall figure grew 24 per cent during the period studied.

One in four Asian-American companies — or 153,096 firms in total — was owned by someone of Chinese descent, the Census Bureau reported.

Korean-Americans owned 104,918 companies, 93,340 were owned by Indo-Americans, 68,675 by Japanese-Americans, 67,625 by Filipino-Americans and 59,674 by Vietnamese-Americans, according to the census.

DAILY BUSINESS BEAT

A review of news from the Arabic press

Company to refinance real estate mortgages to start operation next month

** THE SECONDARY Real Estate Mortgage Company (SREMC) will commence operations next month, Yousef Hiyasat, the director-general of the Housing and Urban Development Department, has said. "Within days, a general manager and a full staff will be appointed and offices will be specified," he added noting that a board of directors has been named after registration procedures have been completed.

The company, in which the private and public sectors are participating, has already done the necessary and final arrangements to issue JD 300 million worth of bonds, Mr. Hiyasat pointed out. This amount, he explained, will finance the company's operations for the first three years and will be generated starting next month in the form of instalments as the sale of the bonds will depend on the dynamism of the market. Mr. Hiyasat indicated that the company will not depend on its JD 5 million capital to run its operations but will resort to issuing bonds to attract the savings of investors or other deposits from institutions which have long-term funds such as the Social Security Corporation, the insurance companies and pension funds.

Mr. Hiyasat noted that the company would mainly depend on these institutions to refinance real estate mortgages that will be provided to them by the banks after securing the mortgages from the people who will be interested to benefit of the company's services.

He said that the work mechanism of the company will not involve building houses and will not deal directly with the public but will be limited only to banks.

According to Mr. Hiyasat, the company has recently obtained a JD200 million from the World Bank to be used for refinancing mortgages that will be offered to it from the day of starting operations until the company becomes able to issue bonds and attract funds. The company will provide its services to all sectors of the society especially the low and middle-income groups because they are the targeted sectors. Although, at the same time, investors in real estate and housing areas could also benefit the department, he said (Al Ra'i).

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLE	FRF
US Dollar	1.4742	0.8448	1.1987	107.70	1.3710	1516.20	1.6545	5.0430	
DE Mark	0.6783	1.0000	0.4372	0.5137	73.05	0.9297	1028.14	1.1222	3.4207
GB Sterling	1.5508	1.5508	1.0000	1.8596	167.03	2.1261	2550.41	2.5648	7.8177
CH Franc	0.8335	1.2279	0.5371	1.0000	89.75	1.1419	1263.29	137.88	4.2024
JP Yen	0.0093	1.3678	0.5982	1.1132	1.0000	1.2723	14.07	153.53	4.6814
CA Dollar	0.7294	1.0749	0.4700	0.8748	1.27	1.0000	1105.50	12.95	3.6770
IT Lira	0.0007	0.9714	0.4249	0.0791	1408.84	0.9637	1.0000	10.90	3.3251
NL Guilder	0.6044	89.08	0.3895	72.51	65.06	0.3284	916.31	1.0000	3.0483
FR Franc	0.1983	0.2921	0.1278	23.7747	21.33	0.2717	32.79	32.7900	1.0000

Energy									
Oil	Last	Previous	Mid-East Currencies						
Brent	20.65	20.55	Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	
WTI	21.55	21.40	SA Riyal	0.2888	0.3932	0.172	0.3201	28.7323	
Bony	20.65	20.55	AE Dirham	0.2723	0.40151	0.17384	0.32689	29.341	
Dubai	18.52	18.45	KW Dinar	3.3434	4.93097	2.15857	4.01445	360.231	
UL Gas	199.00	199.00	BH Dinar	0.3770	3.91083	1.71116	3.18471	235.928	
			CY Pound	2.1723	3.202	1.4005	2.6051	234.022	

Metal Prices									
Metal	Bid	Offer	Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)						
Gold (oz's)	387.15	387.85	Period	1	3	6	9	12	
Silver (oz's)	5.04	5.08	Cncy	Month	Months	Months	Months	Year	
Platinum (oz's)	388.25	399.25	USD	5.09	5.18	5.34	5.68	5.53	
AL (3 Months)	1508	1509	GBP	5.75	5.87	5.90	6.00	6.09	
CU (3 Months)	1937	1940	JPY	0.30	0.42	0.58	0.38	0.81	
Zinc (3 Months)	1039	1042	DEM	0.28	0.35	0.30	3.12	3.43	
Lead (3 Months)	831	835	FRF	3.79	4.00	4.10	4.10	4.18	
Ni (3 Months)	7230	7250	CHF	1.93	2.06	2.18	2.25	2.40	
			ITL	8.81	8.83	8.85	8.83	8.48	

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Value	Chg	% Chg	High	Low	Pr Clk		
New York	DOW JONES	5881.31	-32.18	-0.56	5725.03	5867.83	5713.49		
New York	S&P 500	-0	0	0	0	0	662.1		
London	FT-SE 100	3809.9	-0.8	-0.02	3811.5	3792.4	3810.7		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	20668.6	115.55	0.56	20666.9	20448.7	20551.1		
Paris	CAC 40	1976.09	-13.45	-0.68	1984.07	1973.01	1989.54		
Frankfurt	DAX	2527.34	1.7	0.07	2530.78	2525.78	2525.84		

Energy									
Commodity	Last	Delivery	JOD Cross Rates						
Coffee (c/b)	121.17	Spot	Currency	Buy	Sell				
Cocoa (c/b)	1418	Spot	US Dollar	0.708	0.710				
Sugar (c/b)	385	Spot	GB Sterling	1.0971	1.1028				
Soybean (c/b)	192	Spot	DE Mark	0.4795	0.4819				
Wheat (c/b)	24.05	Spot	CH Franc	0.5887	0.5916				
Tea (c/b)	112	Spot	FR Franc	1.1401	1.1408				
Barley (c/b)	3.54	Spot	JP Yen	0.6547	0.658				
Rice (c/b)	425	Spot	NL Guilder	0.4273	0.4284				
			TT Lira	0.0467	0.0469				

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Diego Maradona heads for Switzerland to kick drug habit

BUENOS AIRES (R) — A day after abruptly ending his stint with local side Boca Juniors, Diego Maradona said Monday he was travelling to a private clinic in Switzerland to treat a recurring drug habit.

"I'm doing this for my daughters who mean more than anything to me and I'm saying this so everyone knows I want to get totally cured," Maradona unexpectedly told local television.

"I'm told there's an 80 per cent chance they will cure my addiction. I'll make up for the rest with grit and courage."

The state news agency Telam said the former Argentine captain, who announced he was quitting Boca Juniors Sunday, boarded a plane for Switzerland at 10 p.m. Monday (0100 GMT Tuesday).

Maradona, 35, was twice suspended from soccer for using drugs — in 1992 when he was playing for Italian club Napoli and during the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

He has also been arrested for cocaine possession in Argentina.

"The Swiss clinic was recommended to me by a friend and I'm going because in Argentina many doctors instead of treating you and curing you just take your money," Maradona said.

"Besides, there is no knowledge about drugs here and many people have no idea how hard it is to get over a bout of depression and an addiction."

Maradona said that after the 12-day treatment he would visit his brother in Canada and then travel to Cuba to meet athletes who took part in the Olympics. "I wanted to go to the United States but since they're not letting me in I'm going to Cuba," he said.

On Sunday, the scandal-



Argentine soccer legend Diego Maradona stares at the ground at the end of the game Boca Juniors against Estudiantes De La Plata. Maradona said he was quitting the Boca Juniors and hinted he might even retire after his team lost 2-1 which dashed their slim hopes of winning the league championship (Reuter photo)

prone midfielder said he was leaving Boca Juniors and hinted he might even retire. He later said he would play for at least one more year but gave no further details.

Maradona announced he was leaving Boca just before the team's penultimate

match of the season against Estudiantes De La Plata Sunday. Boca lost 2-1, dashing their title hopes.

"It's all my fault what is happening to Boca right now," he said before the game.

Maradona, whose contract with Boca lasts until De-

cember 1997, missed a crucial penalty last week in a 1-0 defeat to Racing Club. It was his fifth consecutive penalty miss.

Maradona said last month he had turned down an offer by a Japanese club because he wanted to lead Boca to the championship title.

Pagnozzi named Italian soccer federation boss

ROME (R) — The Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) Monday appointed its own Secretary General Raffaele Pagnozzi as the temporary head of an Italian soccer federation left leaderless after a bitter election battle.

Pagnozzi was formally named as an "extraordinary commissioner" — only the fourth such appointment in an Italian soccer history dating back to 1898 — to run the Federalcio with immediate effect.

His most recent task was to lead Italy's delegation to the Atlanta Olympics.

"It was a difficult decision," CONI President Mario Pescante told reporters after a five-hour meeting.

"We did not want to humiliate the soccer world. The decision came late because of the doubts of Antonio Matarrese, who said that he believed there were several clubs ready to take legal action to challenge the measure."

The appointment had been widely expected after representatives of the country's professional and amateur clubs failed to pick a replacement for outgoing Federation President Matarrese last Tuesday.

Pescante said Pagnozzi would have wide-ranging powers and would not be merely a figurehead.

Matarrese, who came under fire after Italy's lacklustre showing in Euro 96, resigned after being challenged for his job by Luciano Nizzola, president of the league which

groups Serie A and B clubs, and Serie C President Giancarlo Abete.

Despite two votes in a 14-hour meeting last week, neither of the two claimants to the post were able to secure the required backing of a third of each league to be elected.

CONI officials said after that fiasco, dubbed the "longest and most miserable day in Italian soccer" by the daily Gazzetta Dello Sport newspaper, another election was unlikely to be called for several months.

The Serie A league season gets underway on Sept. 8 but the full list of the 1996-97 match fixtures has yet to be published beyond the first 10 days.

Italy also has an important World Cup qualifier against Moldova on Oct. 5 with national coach Arrigo Sacchi's tenure still in doubt despite his having signed a contract under Matarrese to take the team through to 1998.

Pagnozzi's appointment was aimed at bringing order to the chaos and also ensuring that the federation is represented at an important UEFA meeting scheduled for Thursday in Geneva.

Matarrese will also be present at that meeting but only in his capacity as a UEFA and FIFA vice-president.

Italy's Serie A and B clubs are due to meet again in Milan on Aug. 26 to discuss the season's fixtures and also debate again the candidacy of Nizzola.

Swinburn back with victory

LONDON (R) — Walter Swinburn made a triumphant return to race-riding Monday more than six months after suffering life-threatening injuries in a fall in Hong Kong.

The jockey's frustrating spell on the sidelines was all but forgotten as he steered 5-1 favourite Talathath to victory at Windsor races in his first ride since the fall.

Swinburn, 35, the winner of the Epsom Derby three times, came back to a tremendous ovation.

"I just wanted to come back and ride. But to have a winner on top of that is something I really won't believe until I get home tonight," he said.

"I really appreciate all the interest and I think I got a bigger round of applause than the three derbies put together."

"I've had so many messages of support but it would be wrong to single out anyone. Each and everyone has meant an awful lot to me."



Argentine striker told to get a haircut

AVELLINO, Italy — An Argentine striker hoping to join Italian Serie B soccer club Avellino was told he must get a haircut before terms could be discussed. "First get your hair cut, then we'll talk about tests and fees. We've never had room for people with long hair at Avellino," Club President Antonio Sibilla told 26-year-old striker Leonardo Ricatti when he arrived Sunday. He gave the player a day to "get himself in order." Ricatti greeted Sibilla's order with a smile, without indicating whether he would comply. The striker, formerly of Argentine clubs Boca Juniors and San Lorenzo, had been recommended to the southern Italian club by compatriot and former Avellino player Ramon Diaz. The photograph shows Ricatti (left) posing in the field of Avellino with Sibilla (Reuter photo)

Olajuwon weds in prearranged marriage

HOUSTON (AP) — Following the Islamic custom of pre-arranged marriages, Houston Rockets star Hakeem Olajuwon wed Dalia Asafi last week in a traditional ceremony.

"There is no dating process, no boyfriends and girlfriends in Islam," Olajuwon said in a statement Monday. "Families meet, talk, get to know one another. Then the marriage is arranged."

Olajuwon, 33, was born in Nigeria and reared as a Muslim, recommitting to

the Islamic faith as an adult. He is now a U.S. citizen and played for the U.S. team that won the Olympic gold medal in basketball.

Olajuwon worshipped for years at the same Houston mosque as the 18-year-old bride's father. But since men and women are separated when praying, he did not meet his future bride or her mother until a meeting was arranged.

"In the Islam faith, it is customary for a girl to marry much younger than they do in America. At age

15 or 16, for instance," Olajuwon said. "Dalia may be 18 in terms of age, but because of her background, beliefs and religious understanding, she, like many other Islamic young women, possesses a maturity, knowledge and wisdom beyond her years."

They were married Thursday in Houston. It is a first marriage for both. Olajuwon has an 8-year-old daughter, Abisola, from a prior relationship.

"It was a very private ceremony with just family,"

said Pamela Greaney, Olajuwon's personal assistant. "They're both very happy."

Ms. Greaney said Dalia Olajuwon, who wants to study medicine, received a \$1,000 scholarship from the athlete's The Dream Foundation in June.

Ms. Greaney, who is administrator of the charity, said Dalia Olajuwon probably will have to return the scholarship because family members of those involved in the foundation cannot receive a scholarship.

Last month, Olajuwon signed a \$55 million, five-year contract extension with the Rockets.

Olajuwon leaves Sunday for Australia, where he will join other NBA players in appearances. Ms. Greaney did not know if Olajuwon would be accompanied by his wife.

Paraguay suspicious over Argentina injuries

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Paraguayan soccer officials said Monday they were worried and suspicious after two of their top players were injured in the Argentine championship less than one month before the countries meet in a World Cup qualifier.

"We don't want to think this but it seems that they are going in very hard on our players with a view to keeping them out of the match," said Jimmy Irala, Paraguay's national team coordinator. "We are worried."

Four Paraguayan internationals play their club football in Argentina including temperamental Jose Chilavert, the self-styled "best goalkeeper in the world," who is based with champions Velez Sarsfield.

The two countries meet in a South American World

Cup qualifier on Sept. 1 and bad feeling is already in the air after Diego Maradona's prediction of a 5-0 win for Argentina.

Irala, whose views have been echoed by the Paraguayan media, said the worst incident was a tackle on Chilavert last week by San Lorenzo's rugged defender Oscar Ruggeri, a former Argentine international.

"From the way Ruggeri went in, it seemed that he wanted to cause Chilavert an injury," said Irala in a telephone interview from the Paraguayan Football League's (LPF) headquarters in Asuncion.

"That's how it came across from the way he went in," he said, adding that Chilavert and Ruggeri were old foes.

The alarm bells were again ringing when midfielder Roberto Acuna, who

plays for Independiente, had to be substituted after suffering another heavy tackle, also last week.

Chilavert, who this season has scored two goals from free kicks and one from a penalty in the Argentine championship, played for Velez Sunday and Acuna is still expected to be fit for the crucial match.

LPF official Juan Angel Napout told reporters in Asuncion Monday: "I hope the situation doesn't get any worse and that we get there in one piece."

The Paraguayan media gave ample space to the subject over the weekend with many commentators voicing the same concerns.

Argentina desperately need to win in the match, having drawn their last game 0-0 with Peru and lost the previous one 2-0 to Ecuador.

GOREN BRIDGE

SOME ARE MORE EQUAL

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ 9 8 4
♥ A Q 5 2
♦ Q J 10 9
♣ A Q

EAST
♠ K 8 5
♥ K 7 4
♦ K 5 4 3 2
♣ 6 4

WEST
♠ 3 2
♥ J 10 9 8
♦ K 7 6
♣ J 9 8 2

SOUTH
♠ A Q 10 7 6
♥ 6 3
♦ A
♣ K 10 7 5 3

The bidding:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1NT Pass 3♦ Pass
4♦ Pass 6♦ Pass
6♦ Pass

Opening lead: Jack of ♣

In a vacuum any finesse stands a 50 percent chance of succeeding — either the right defender will have the key card or it will be with the other. That does not mean it makes no difference which finesse you take. Consider this deal.

Despite holding three cards in partner's major, we think we would have raised three no trumps with the North hand. Once North chose to raise spades, South blazed into an optimistic six spades on finding out that there were enough aces in the North hand to guarantee that two hearts would not be lost on the fly.

West led the jack of hearts, declarer tried the queen and East's king won. The heart return was taken in dummy and three rounds of trumps were drawn. After cashing the ace and queen of clubs, declarer came to hand with the ace of diamonds and tried to run clubs. Unfortunately the jack of clubs led to score the setting trick. Note that trying to ruff a club in dummy would also have failed.

Even had the heart finesse succeeded, the plan would not have been guaranteed — there were still the fourth and fifth clubs to be handled. Declarer overlooked the power of the diamond sequence in dummy. South should rise with the ace of hearts at trick one, then draw trumps with the help of repeated finesses. After cashing the ace of diamonds, declarer crosses to the queen of clubs to lead the queen of diamonds. Whether or not East covers, declarer discards the losing heart. After regaining the lead, declarer re-enters dummy with the ace of clubs, takes help of clubs on the table's high diamonds, then claims the rest. Making six odd.

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TABLE CLOTHS BABY ITEMS CUSHIONS QUILTS COSMETIC BAGS TRAY MATS ALBUMS TABLE CLOTHS FOR CARD PLAYERS PICTURE FRAMES SHAWLS T-SHIRTS

TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL: 634144 PHILADELPHIA	CINEMA TEL: 899238 PLAZA Laila Alawi & Singer Mohammad Fuad In Traffic Lights (Arabic) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL: 697420 CONCORD CONCORD "1" Julia Roberts...in Something to Talk About Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Amman Theatre & Cinema TEL: 618274-818275 Today presents Zawad Weld Awad theatre group in the play entitled Five-Star Government Starring comedians: Mahmoud Saimah & Hussein Tubeishat play starts 8:30 p.m	Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155 PRESENTS THE SATIRICAL COMEDY Arab Human Rights At 8:30 p.m. For reservation please call 625155-640155
	CINEMA TEL: 634144 PHILADELPHIA	CINEMA TEL: 899238 PLAZA Laila Alawi & Singer Mohammad Fuad In Traffic Lights (Arabic) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL: 697420 CONCORD CONCORD "1" Julia Roberts...in Something to Talk About Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Amman Theatre & Cinema TEL: 618274-818275 Today presents Zawad Weld Awad theatre group in the play entitled Five-Star Government Starring comedians: Mahmoud Saimah & Hussein Tubeishat play starts 8:30 p.m	Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155 PRESENTS THE SATIRICAL COMEDY Arab Human Rights At 8:30 p.m. For reservation please call 625155-640155

Sport Johnson

Burundi's Venuste Ndayishimiye won the men's 5000m gold medal in the men's 5000m final Sunday. Paul Kibid Bwami of Mozambique won the silver medal.

Edberg

INDIANAPOLIS (R) — South-seeded Stefan Edberg of Sweden felt magic once again, routing 9th-ranked Andre Agassi of the United States 6-2, 6-2 Monday in the first round of the \$1.04 million US Open Championships.

"I felt really good there," Edberg said after the quick, one-set match. "Luckily, I got to a good start. Once I was quite happy the match went."

Olympic doubles medalists Todd Woodbridge and Mark Woodford of Australia won with solo performance Monday. The four-time Wimbledon champions are taking a break from tennis to play in the World Cup of Tennis.

Suburb Ap

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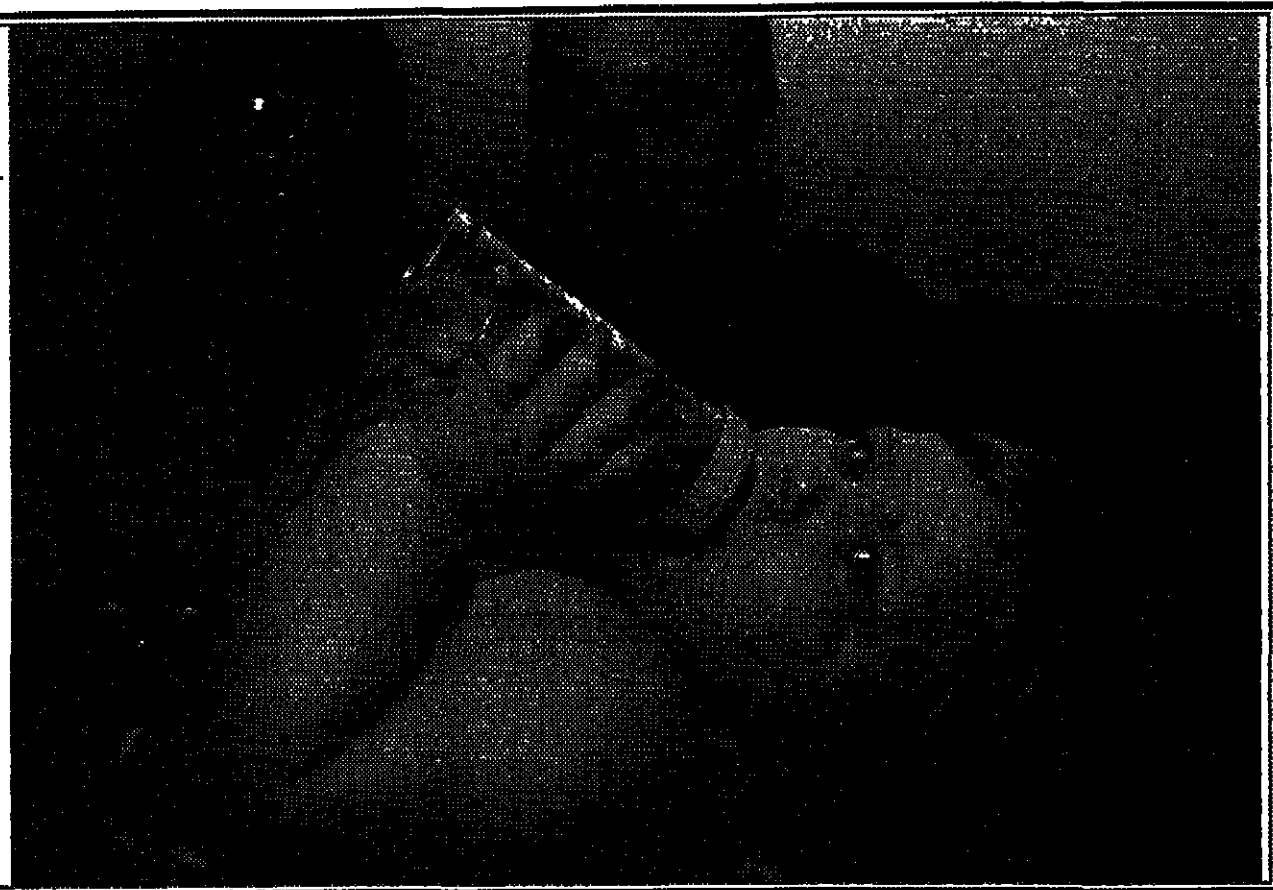
EMB

INDEPENDI

On the occasion of flag-hoisting ceremony August 15, 1996 at Embassy of India, Maldives Hospital. All Indians and their family members are invited to the function.

SUPER BABY

Eighteen-month-old Zack Strenkert, who is 0.9 metres tall and weighs 30.8 kilograms, drinks from a bottle as his parents, Laurie and Chris Strenkert look on. Zack, who weighed 10.47 kilograms at birth, has been growing in extraordinary spurts ever since (Reuters photo)



Gaza police arrest rights worker over report of suspicious death

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian police arrested the head of a human rights group overnight after he implicated security services in the mysterious death of a man after questioning by police. Palestinian officials said Tuesday.

Mohammad Dahman, director of a prisoners' support group called Al Damir (Conscience) and a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), was arrested at his home overnight. Security officials said.

He was later charged with publishing "false and provocative information" against the Palestinian National Authority and was remanded in custody for 48 hours, they said.

Mr. Dahman's arrest came just hours after Al Damir issued a statement calling for an investigation into the death last week of a 24-year-old Gaza man,

Nahid Dahlan, following interrogation by Palestinian police. Attorney General Khalid Al Kidrah confirmed that Dahlan had been questioned daily over a period of a week before his body was found near his home in the village of Zweideh on Aug. 7.

Mr. Kidrah said an autopsy found that Dahlan had committed suicide by swallowing insecticide. "The autopsy found no traces of torture or mistreatment on his body," he told AFP, adding that Dahlan had personal and financial problems.

He would not comment on why police had been interrogating the man.

But in its statement on the incident, Al Damir described Dahlan's death as a murder and called on the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) "to reveal and announce the murderers and take legal action against them," the

Gaza incidents came at a time when Palestinian security services are under increasing public scrutiny following charges of torture and other excesses in the Palestinian autonomous areas.

Three policemen were given long jail terms early this month after being charged with torturing a prisoner to death in a nablus jail, and police shot and killed a man in the West Bank town of Tulkarm during a violent protest outside the local prison.

The PNA on Tuesday banned a public meeting in Nablus called by members of the elected Palestinian legislative council to discuss the incidents.

Amnesty International has condemned the use of torture in Palestinian prisons, and launched a campaign in favour of one brutally tortured inmate, the daily Norwegian afterposten quoted a

spokesman as saying Tuesday. The Director of Amnesty's Norwegian Branch, Jan Borgen, who has just returned from a one-week trip to the Gaza Strip, told afterposten that the situation in prisons there was "worse" than he had expected.

He said he had presented Palestinian authorities with "information on serious abuses concerning half of the some 400 (Palestinian) political prisoners."

Mr. Borgen said seven inmates had died in Palestinian prisons since September 1993, which marked the beginning of Palestinian autonomy in the west bank and Gaza Strip.

This week amnesty began campaigning for a 31-year-old prisoner from the west bank, whose life is threatened, Mr. Borgen said.

He said Nasser Joma was abused the same night

another prisoner, Mahmud Jemayel, succumbed to injuries after being tortured.

The Afterposten said last week that Joma had been seen by other fellow inmates, "lying on the ground, wearing only underwear, his body marked with bruises and numerous burns."

"We call on Yasser Arafat to clearly distance himself from torture and to take steps so that this kind of abuse does not happen again in Palestinian prisons," Mr. Borgen said.

Mr. Borgen, who travelled to the Gaza Strip with Liz Hodgkin, an Amnesty delegate in charge of the Middle East in London, was not able to meet with Arafat. Amnesty urged countries contributing to the Gaza Strip's development to put pressure on the Palestinian authorities to respect human rights.

NATO commander inspects Serb base

HAN PIJESAK, Bosnia-Herzegovina (Agencies) — The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) ground forces commander in Bosnia Tuesday successfully carried out an inspection of a military site that is believed to be the lair of Serb army chief Ratko Mladic.

General Michael Walker, accompanied by acting Bosnian Serb President Biljana Plavcic and General Mladic's deputy, General Milan Gvero, toured the site for five hours and then told reporters he had had "what I would call a successful day."

A spokesman for the NATO-led Peace Implementation Force (IFOR) in Sarajevo also said the inspection appeared to have been a success.

The rebel Serbs had refused over the weekend to give way to a NATO demand for full access to the Han Pijesak base, allowing inspectors to visit two sites at the base but refusing access to a third.

However, they backed down on Monday after a meeting at Pale between Mr. Plavcic and several NATO officials including Secretary General Javier Solana.

It was not known where Gen. Mladic, indicted by the international criminal tribunal in the Hague on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity, was during the time of the inspection.

Gen. Walker arrived from Pale, the Serb administrative centre, in mid-morning aboard a Lynx helicopter escorted by three helicopter gunships.

With a team of NATO officials Gen. Walker visited the Crna Rijeka site then another at Luburica Polje.

He spoke briefly before heading back to Sarajevo after the inspection. "We have agreed how to put right the areas that we recognised between the RS (Republika Srpska) army and IFOR," he said. "We were interested in making sure that we have access to the site."

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher mean-

while conceded that Bosnian elections are unlikely to meet northern European standards, with particular concern over the prevention of refugees voting in their home towns.

But Mr. Christopher, embarking on a week of Balkan diplomacy, said it was essential to hold the Sept. 14 vote and he would spend the next month trying to ensure that it met the highest possible standards "under the circumstances."

Mr. Christopher flew to Brussels on Monday for meetings on Tuesday with NATO leaders. On Wednesday he will meet the presidents of Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia in Geneva, and on Thursday he will pay a short visit to Bosnia itself.

Speaking to reporters aboard his plane from Washington, Mr. Christopher declined to say whether the elections would be free and fair as laid down in last November's Dayton peace agreement which ended more than three years of war in Bosnia.

But he said: "I think it's essential the elections go forward" in order to create institutions for the new two-part Bosnian state agreed at Dayton, consisting of a Muslim-Croat federation and a Serb "republic."

"We have got just about a month ahead in which more work can be done so that the elections can reach the highest standards possible under those circumstances," he said.

"No one has thought that the elections would be perfect, or that they can be judged the standards of, say, northern Europe."

I think the elections will be a very strong unifying factor within the country."

Mr. Christopher said the background of war and ethnic hatreds in Bosnia made it unlikely the elections would meet the standards of countries with long-standing democracies.

"The confidence that people have to return to the areas from which they came is a place where we probably won't achieve the level of perfection that we'd like to achieve," he said.



Andrew, Fergie spend vacation together

LONDON (AFP) — Prince Andrew and his former wife Sarah Ferguson are spending their holidays together at a chateau near Orleans, in central France, the British press reported Monday. The couple, who were officially divorced in June, flew to France by helicopter with their two daughters, Princess Beatrice, 8, and Princess Eugenie, 6, newspapers quoted friends of the royal pair as saying. Prince Andrew, Queen Elizabeth II's second son, and "Fergie," as the Duchess of York is known, have remained good friends despite several years spent living apart. Last year the two spent several days together on holiday in Spain. Recently they co-hosted a party for Beatrice's eighth birthday at Prince Andrew's Berkshire home in Sunninghill Park, in southeastern Britain.

Magazine apologises to Tom Cruise

BONN (R) — A German magazine has apologised to Hollywood heart throb Tom Cruise for an article it published that wrongly reported the 34-year-old sex symbol was unable to have children because his sperm count was too low.

"Bunte has been informed that Tom Cruise is not infertile and that his sperm count is completely normal. Bunte has no reason to believe anything else," the Burda Publishing House said in a statement issued late Monday night. "Bunte apologises to Tom Cruise and his family for this embarrassing and irritating incident," it said, adding that the journalist who conducted the interview would never work for the magazine again. Cruise filed a \$60 million defamation lawsuit in Los Angeles this month over the article.

Bunte acknowledged that "a significant portion" of the article misquoted the star actor. Cruise, now starring in the blockbuster movie Mission Impossible, is married to actress Nicole Kidman, who starred in Batman Forever and To Die For. The couple have two adopted children, Connor, 18 months, and Isabella, 3. Cruise rose to stardom in the 1983 movie Risky Business. His first blockbuster movie was Top Gun in 1986 in which he played a devil-may-care fighter pilot. He was nominated for an Oscar for his work as a Vietnam veteran in the 1989 film Born On The Fourth Of July.

French climber sets record in Himalayas

GRENOBLE, France (R) — French mountaineer Jean-Christophe Lafaille has set a world record by climbing two Himalayan peaks more than 8,000 metres high (26,240 feet) in less than four days, his agent said Tuesday. Mr. Lafaille, 31, climbed Gasherbrum II, 8,035 metres (26,355 feet) high, then Gasherbrum I, 8,068 metres (26,463 feet), in the Baltoro region of Pakistan on July 28-31, agent Catherine Giry Devaux said. "No one has ever climbed two such summits in a row in such a short time, alone and without coming back to the base camp," she said. In 1984, Reinhold Messner and Hans Kammerlander took seven days to cover the same route. Mr. Lafaille reached the top of Gasherbrum II "by the normal route and only 11 hours and 20 minutes after he had left the advanced base camp situated at a height of 5,900 metres (19,352 feet)," Giry Devaux said. The next day, he climbed the northwest slope of Gasherbrum I.

Cyprus police launch hunt for youth's killers

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Cyprus police are trying to identify and track down Turks who clubbed to death a young Greek Cypriot during demonstrations on the island on Sunday, a government official said on Tuesday.

"If police manage to identify the suspects, then yes, I am going to instruct police to issue arrest warrants," Cypriot Attorney-General Alecos Markides told Reuters.

Tasos Isaac, 24, was beaten to death by a mob of Turks in the United Nations-controlled buffer zone at the village of Dherinia, 100 kilometres southeast of the capital Nicosia on Sunday afternoon.

The killing was shown live on Cyprus television.

Isaac, one of several hundred Greek Cypriots who entered the buffer zone to protest against Turkey's occupation of the island, fell into barbed wire and was trapped as Turkish civilians descended on him with steel pipes.

"If the suspects are identified the warrants will be issued in all countries Cyprus has multilateral or bilateral agreements with for them to be extradited to face trial," said Mr. Markides.

The Cypriot government has said the killers were members of the right-wing Grey Wolves militant movement. Eyewitnesses said Turkish Cypriot police were also involved in the attack.

More than 50 people were injured on both sides of the divide from the clashes, the most violent in two decades.

Isaac's funeral, at state expense, was held at his home town of Paralimni in the southeast of the island on Tuesday.

The United Nations reacted angrily to the violence.

"It is not the task of the United Nations to control demonstrations, and its limited resources were stretched to the fullest on Sunday as they tried to control the fast-moving disparate groups of demonstrators on both sides, some of them armed, who entered the U.N. buffer zone simultaneously in several areas," U.N. spokeswoman Sylvana Foa told reporters in New York.

"This responsibility belongs to the authorities on the island. Needless to say, it would have been better to prevent this kind of event, which does nothing to further efforts to find a durable solution to the Cyprus problem. They are very angry upstairs in (the U.N.) peacekeeping (department) about this," she said.

But in Cyprus, Foreign Minister Alecos Michaelides told Reuters the U.N. statement "did not reflect the true facts."

"She fails to state the shooting from the other side, that (Turkish) demonstrators were not there to demonstrate but to kill. We have films showing the viciousness by which people were beaten with steel bars, one of whom was brutally murdered," he said.

Mr. Michaelides said he was alarmed that the United Nations did not mention the presence of members of the Turkish Grey Wolves militant group in the area.

"That is a vital fact. The Turkish side invited in these Grey Wolves terrorists for a demonstration and Sylvana Foa neglects this. If the U.N. fails to make note of this it is like encouraging these terrorists to return."

Ms. Foa said although the Cyprus government persuaded a Greek Cypriot motorcycle association not to break through the ceasefire line en masse, as planned, "the Cyprus police acted slowly when groups of demonstrators breached the U.N. buffer zone in several places at the same time."

"The Turkish forces, at the same time, allowed Turkish Cypriot civilians armed with sticks and pipes to enter a military zone where access is normally restricted and to pass through into the U.N. buffer zone, where they clashed with the demonstrators," she said.

Despite efforts by the U.N. Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) to control the situation, "an estimated 70 civilians were injured on both sides and one Greek Cypriot demonstrator was beaten so severely that he died of injuries," Ms. Foa said.

Two Irish U.N. civilian police officers went to the man's aid but arrived too late, she said. Twelve members of the U.N. force were injured, including two Irish civilian police officers, one member of the Hungarian contingent and nine from the Austrian contingent, she added.

UNFICYP was investigating the clashes, Ms. Foa said. Asked how much of a setback the incident was for the stalled Cyprus peace process, Ms. Foa said: "People feel that tensions have increased. However, at the same time, sometimes a tragedy like this can bring people quickly to their senses, and they might just now take advantage of this to sit down and start these talks."

Lebanese parliament approves election law

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's parliament on Tuesday approved a draft parliamentary elections law to replace a law declared invalid by the constitutional court, but opposition deputies immediately said they would appeal against it.

"The law has been approved," Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri said after a two-hour extraordinary session of parliament discussing the draft law quickly prepared by the government on Friday, a day after the old one was struck down by the court.

The only change ordered by parliament to the new law was adding a phrase that leaves the door open for the Syrian-backed government to change the dates of the five election rounds, which officials had said would begin on Sunday.

Some deputies said after the ruling that they will lodge a new appeal with the court to have the new law declared invalid, arguing it differed little from the old law by keeping electoral divisions seen as discriminatory against opposition Christians.

The old law had stirred a storm of protest and was petitioned against as discriminatory by 10 Christian and Muslim leftist opposition deputies — a rare challenge to the government.

The court had approved the deputies' petition and annulled an article in the old law that made an exception of the Christian heartland of Mount Lebanon by splitting it into six small districts. It also joined two South Lebanon constituencies into one voting area.

The new law passed by parliament kept the electoral divisions noted in the

old law but said they would be for "one exceptional time."

Christian opposition leaders have said that these electoral divisions make it more difficult for the minority community to elect representatives opposed to the presence of 35,000 Syrian troops in Lebanon who give Damascus a major say in Beirut.

The Christian minority, most of which along with many Muslims boycotted polls in 1992 partly in protest at the Syrian military presence, is deeply split now over whether to vote in the new polls.

Muslim leftist Deputy Habib Sadeq told Reuters at least seven opposition deputies had asked him to prepare the new appeal on Tuesday. Any appeal to the court needs the signature of 10 deputies.

"This law is unconstitutional and its justifications for the exceptional circumstances are illogical," Christian deputy Marwan Abu Fadel, another one of the 10 deputies who lodged the first appeal, told the house before it voted.

"This draft does not differ at all from the old one and should be subject to an appeal against it," Beirut Deputy Najah Wakim, a leftist Christian who signed the first appeal, said.

Seventy deputies out of 90 who attended the session voted for the draft law, while 18 vote against it and two abstained.

The Mount Lebanon split aims to assure election of former Druze warlord Walid Junblat, a key minister allied to Syria and Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri.

U.S. intelligence was unprepared for Saudi bombing — report

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. intelligence operations were unprepared to deal with the threat posed to Americans serving in Saudi Arabia, where a truck bomb killed U.S. airmen on June 25, a congressional report says.

The bombing exposed "the shortcomings of a U.S. intelligence apparatus that left Americans unprepared for the threat that confronted them," said a draft report by the staff of the House of Representatives National Security Committee. It was obtained by the publication White House weekly and published in its Monday edition.

"The ability to acquire and process accurate and timely intelligence is critical to the successful execution of any military mission," the draft said.

The report did not detail where the communication process broke down.

But it was critical of the 90-day rotations of American personnel, saying that hurt the ability to establish ongoing, stable relationships with Saudi security officials.

"Because the various sensibilities of the host nation often complicate the mission of U.S. forces, some of these organisational shortcomings are a growing hallmark of 'temporary' or 'contingency' missions that in reality become long-term," the draft said.

Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon, in a statement to White House weekly, detailed efforts to improve security both before and after the bomb-

ing of the U.S. military housing complex in Dhahran.

Mr. Bacon said senior officers' tours of duty were lengthened before the bombing. Since then, he noted, operations have been moved to more secure locations in Saudi Arabia.

An Israeli official said American intelligence services believe that Iranian-backed Lebanese guerrillas may have been involved in the June bombing of a U.S. barracks in Saudi Arabia that left 19 airmen dead.

"We have information confirming that American agencies believe that Hizbollah was involved" in the attack in Dhahran, said a senior official in the prime minister's office, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The official added that Israeli intelligence "do not yet have any details of who was involved in the bombing."

U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry hinted earlier this month that Iran may be behind the terrorist strike and warned the U.S. would take "strong action" against any nation linked to the bombing.

Hizbollah, which is financed and controlled by Iran, has been waging a guerrilla war against Israeli troops in South Lebanon for over a decade.

The Maariv daily quoted Israeli sources as saying chances for an American strike against Iran in coming months would be high if an official announcement was made blaming Hizbollah.

Settlement resumed

THE FIRST SALEM (R) — The first for and negotiations between the two sides since a wave of suicide bombings by militants struck Israel in February. The talks, now focused on technical issues concerning coordination of civilian activities in the occupied territories, resumed Tuesday.

But Palestinian negotiators said they had more pressing issues to address. "We submitted a protest over the Israeli government's decision to lift the economic sanctions on settlements," said Jundi Tarif, the official in charge of Palestinian talks for the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

"We explained to the Israeli that our people are boiling over this," he said. "Israel wants peace but they have to understand that there will not be peace with settlements."

Hasan Ashraf, head of the PNA negotiation department and settlement growth was "a very serious threat to the peace process and an insult to Palestinian national dignity."

All other topics on the agenda were put off until the next meeting, he said. The Palestinian-Libyan civil committee convened in a hotel in Jerusalem for its first session since Feb. 14, after suicide bombers killed people in attacks in February and early March.